

been unseasonably balmy turned stormy, and a cold wind howled. Regie shivered and looked sick and afraid. I helped her to the car, and it was there she told me that she was under treatment for cancer of the nerve cells and the wind hurt her skin. She touched her head and slid off her dark, shiny hair, revealing a bald head. Gazing out the car window at the counterculture's festival of life, I saw it turn into its opposite—the heads looked like skulls, and the dance was a dance of death.

III VALLEY OF DEATH

ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 1967, at 9 A.M., I was drinking coffee in the history department lounge. I stared out the tinted windows at the smog-shrouded, sprawling campus and wondered what I was doing there. Suddenly, a teaching assistant burst into the room, shouting: "Anyone here know Audrey Rosenthal?"

"I do," I said.

"She was killed in a plane crash." An item on the late-night television news the night before formed in my mind, the exact words: "A South African Airways jet crashed into the Indian Ocean. No survivors were reported."

The messenger who so rudely trumpeted the news of Audrey's death left after slapping a newspaper down. I picked it up as if it was contaminated and carried it back to my table by the window. It was the late edition of the *Los Angeles Times*. I found the news brief on the second page:

No sign of survivors was found in Monday's crash of a South African Airways plane with 25 persons aboard in the Indian Ocean off East London, South Africa. One of the passengers aboard the

turboprop Viscount was identified as Audrey Rosenthal, about 27, who was reported to have a doctorate degree in History from the University of California and to have lived in Los Angeles. Her official address was given as that of her parents in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I read the front page, hoping to find a context for this unthinkable event. Perhaps I found it here.

VIETNAM: NEW YANK SWEEP: ANYTHING USEFUL DESTROYED.

Col. Marvin Fuller, commander of a brigade in the operation said water buffalo, ducks, chickens and pigs were being slaughtered to deny fresh meat to enemy battalions. Dogs were killed.

During the following days and nights, those of us who were close to Audrey talked on the phone almost in whispers as if broadcasting the news would make it final.

We knew that Audrey wouldn't have been in South Africa for a vacation, as there was a boycott of the country by activists. So if she had been there, it would have been as part of a political mission. But none of us were willing to believe that Audrey was dead until we heard it from Martin. He had taught us not to trust a word from the South African government. We couldn't reach him, however; the phone in his and Audrey's London flat rang and rang at all hours night and day. Then on the fourth day a letter arrived from Martin telling us that we, Audrey's friends, must know that Audrey had died committed and for a cause. I wondered if Audrey had been sent on a suicide mission. I wrote to Martin:

I do not want to pour my sorrow on top of your own. Therefore, I should not write at all. But I feel so sick and empty, and I imagine you are feeling what I am multiplied to infinity. I have never experienced death before. No one that I have loved has ever died and I keep thinking, "anyone but Audrey." So little time to know

one of the few people I have thoroughly respected . . . As for Audrey, I think she died a finer death and lived a finer life than most of us have or will. She had nothing, but friends. But as for me and you and all the others who will never see Audrey again, there is a void, a pain in the gut or somewhere there, that will never go away and all the crap seems grossly more trivial than it ever has before. God, I'm sorry Martin.

Then I went dancing. I drove alone to Topanga Canyon Road until I reached Audrey's favorite dance spot, the Topanga Corral.

Dancing alone at the crowded Topanga Corral to the Stone Pony, mourning in that dance hall alone among strangers, I hoped that there were others like Audrey. I hoped that I could be like her and I hoped that the world could be better. I made a vow then to live every moment of my life as if it were the last, and to live as Audrey would have. I danced until closing. When I returned home, the lights were on in my studio. I opened the door warily and stood face to face with a tall canvas propped against the refrigerator. Across the top was written, "Requiem for Audrey," and it was signed by Louis. All blues and greens and turquoise, it was the underwater world at the bottom of the ocean. Schools of silvery fish, whales, dolphins, and sea horses surrounded a mermaid with wild dark hair, cushioned on a bed of inky coral. I cried myself to sleep and dreamed of skin-diving among coral reefs, nudged by porpoises.

On Palm Sunday, less than a week after Audrey's death, I boarded a jet bound for the University of Virginia and the archives I would use for my doctoral dissertation. I was terrified of flying, but at 40,000 feet listening to Mozart's "Requiem" on the headphones, I almost hoped the plane would crash. As we passed over Oklahoma, I could see the strip of red earth representing the small homeland from which I was permanently

Louis had tried to persuade me to cancel the trip, arguing that I needed the time to mourn and that I needed him and my friends. But

although I feared the loneliness, I wanted to be alone in an unfamiliar place. Thinking about Audrey's death was ripping me apart. I would lose myself in research. I wrote to Martin from Virginia:

I have worked furiously, as I never have before, to keep from thinking, but after 5 P.M. when the library closes until the early morning hours I am completely alone. I have written a great deal in those hours (not my dissertation) and have tried to resolve the terrible emptiness and loss of meaning that came that morning when I heard of Audrey's death. Of course, the emptiness is still there. But I think I have come to terms with that; it will remain. But I have thought through some things about Audrey, about life, about death, and about love, that will not go away either. I cannot see Audrey's death (or life) as tragedy. Catastrophe, yes, but not tragedy. That valiant little soul moving quietly and sensitively through mazes of indifference, chaos and pseudo-consciousness, without ever giving in, stubbornly refusing to "succeed," in the establishment. The tragedy is ours, not hers. I think she was the only living person for whom I held unquestioned affection and trust. I have by now recalled practically every moment we spent together, every word we exchanged, priceless words and moments. I remember especially our picketing at the Governor's conference at Century City, so frustrated, so ridiculous. Marching round with ragged signs with a few organizational demonstrators chanting in unison "Peace!" in answer to the cheerleaders, "What do you want?" Neither Audrey nor I were terribly interested in "Peace." We wanted justice, intelligence, or even pragmatism.

But Audrey is dead, and I cannot pretend to have found anything positive in that hard, cruel fact. They say it is the only air crash in that airline's history, and just 25 people aboard. It makes one believe in God or fate or absurdity. And I am in Charlottesville. Being here is absurd and completely pointless, as it should be, the only fitting state for my emotions. There are so many levels of cruelty in it

though. I do not find death horrifying and as I said before, Audrey died a finer death than most. But to lose a saint (my theory of saints, perhaps analogous to Sartre's existential hero) is another thing still. I am arrogant and feel superior or at least equal to most people, in my values, sensitivity, etc. Audrey was one of those few people who made me feel humble, just a little less, and therefore, a little more than I actually am.

Every morning of those five days in Charlottesville, I felt gratefully invisible as I walked across the university campus to the library and descended into the basement that housed the archives. As I signed into the archives, removed folders from boxes, read handwritten documents, being there struck me as absurd and completely pointless. I felt like Old King Cole counting his gold, and I recalled Goethe's Faust commenting on scholars: "They start out to dig for gold and rejoice if they find a worm." Then I thought of Marx working in the British Museum day after day, year after year, building his case against capital. That kept me going.

At the same time, I was immersed in the documents. My dissertation was to be a history of five generations of a slave-owning family—the Berkeleys of Barn Elms—in the Virginia Tidewater, from 1712 to the Civil War. My literary model was Thomas Mann's multigenerational novel, *Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family*. I chose the Berkeley family because the archive librarian was a Berkeley descendent, so the family papers had been preserved meticulously. I was not surprised that plantation masters were actually capitalists, but I was struck by their *obsession* with business. The plantation was a business enterprise first and last. The original record books contained the "headcounts of negroes, cattle, and hogs" with the dates of purchases and sales, or birth, age, and gender next to each, organized by date of purchase rather than species. Most chilling, though, was that each one was named—humans and animals—with one name. Bessie might be a cow, a sow, or an African woman; Jed could be a bull, a hog, or an African man. All that separated the humans from the livestock was the whip, reserved for humans only, and duly noted in plantation records.

The Berkeley family invited me to dinner. Some of the furniture from the original plantation, "Barn Elms," was in the home, including the dining room table and the crystal chandelier. They seemed to admire their ancestors, but they must have had something to hide because they asked me to sign an affidavit swearing I would publish nothing on the Berkeleys without their permission. They spoke positively, if paternalistically, about the civil rights movement. They claimed to detest the Ku Klux Klan and Alabama governor George Wallace. They would like to see Nelson Rockefeller as president of the United States. Other dinner guests included several northern university professors who romanticized the old South.

On Saturday night I attended a country and western music concert. The Virginia Boys played and Marty Robbins sang. Marty's hit "Devil Woman" nearly brought the roof down. A sea of white faces. Judging from the parking lot full of pickup trucks with out-of-state plates and gun racks, country folk had come from the mountains of West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and even Pennsylvania. They were familiar rural people—some farmers in overalls, women in feed sack dresses, and others looking uncomfortable in their Easter finery, young men in cowboy boots and felt Stetsons. The ambience pulled me into my own rural past, light-years away. And then I thought: What monstrous deeds the white settlers, even the poor ones, participated in and recall with pride—killing Indians to take the land, lynching blacks, foreign wars. They believe only in blood kin, Jesus, and the flag. Abandoning those icons would be their road to liberation, maintaining them could lead to global annihilation.

On Easter Sunday, I took a bus to Williamsburg, Virginia. I had names of VIPs who were reputed experts on Virginia history to visit at William and Mary College on Monday. The Rockefeller family's contribution to commemorating the origins of the United States, "Colonial Williamsburg," was a sort of philistine Disneyland, obscene and ghastly. I watched the propaganda film on Virginia and the War of Independence, a clever justification of slavery. Real live black people were dressed up in

colonial slave garb to perform as slaves and house servants and dance jigs. I said to hell with Virginia VIP historians and took the first bus to Washington, D.C., the next morning.

I had two days to spend in Washington before returning to Los Angeles. I walked around the national monuments without feeling pride or admiration or even identification, a foreigner in the country that claimed me as its citizen. In the background the television reported Easter Sunday "love-ins" all over the country interspersed with body counts from the war.

I returned to UCLA to find a letter from Dr. Meyers, saying he had been offered a position at Wesleyan University in Connecticut and wouldn't be able to continue as the chairman of my dissertation committee.

That left me without a patron in an unfamiliar field, burning with resentment for my powerlessness. The Jacksonian specialist whose seminar I was taking agreed to take me on, but the first day I visited him, he said, "Well now I have you under my control and if I can't fuck you, I'll fuck you." My face must have revealed the panic I felt because he laughed and said, "Can't you take a joke?"

That spring, I taught a senior history seminar that met only once a week, so I was able to spend time alone. My place of solitude was a tiny, dark, stuffy, windowless room containing a microfilm reader. There I spent most of every day, emerging into the light like a mole, often with a migraine headache. I would meet Louis for dinner, hardly eating or talking, and then go to bed to encounter my nightmares.

Then I received a call from my Communist Party friend who had wanted to recruit me. He said he'd heard about Audrey and although he didn't know her well, he thought she would have wanted to be at the April 15 antiwar march in San Francisco. He asked if I'd like to go in her place. I rode up with him and we walked for seven hours with a half million others through the streets of San Francisco, ending up in Kezar Stadium in Golden Gate Park for a rally. The other demonstration in

New York had an equally large turnout. In both places, the draft resistance movement elevated its militancy by initiating draft-card burning.

Significantly, leading the spring mobilization, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. had condemned the Vietnam War at Riverside Church in New York. His speech related poverty, racism, war, and imperialism; he refused to condemn the uprisings in black ghettos or angry Black Power rhetoric. King thus alienated most of his allies in the mainstream civil rights movement, who argued in support of President Johnson's War on Poverty and for keeping quiet about foreign affairs. A week after King's speech, Muhammed Ali, the heavyweight boxing champion of the world, was ordered to report for induction into the army. He requested exemption based on his religion, Islam, and was turned down. He refused the draft, was indicted and convicted by an all-white jury, and sentenced to five years in prison (the normal sentence for draft evasion was eighteen months). Then he was stripped of his heavyweight title. The defection of the two most illustrious African Americans—King, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and Ali, the world's heavyweight boxing champion willing to lose millions of dollars and sacrifice his career at its height—to the anti-war camp was a great boost to the antiwar movement.

A week after the marches against the Vietnam War, the U.S. government fomented a military coup in Greece. It was not the first or the last U.S. intervention in Greek affairs after World War II, but it was surely the most brutal. A general overthrew the elected government two days before new elections because the man expected to win was George Papandreu, a Greek nationalist and anti-imperialist. (Later, the event would be the basis for exiled Greek filmmaker Constantin Costa-Gavras's 1968 film *Z*.)

Then came the prewar skirmishes in the Middle East leading up to the Six-Day War in June, resulting in another half-million uprooted Palestinians joining the millions already in refugee camps, and in Israel occupying a hunk of Syria. I was outraged by the anti-Arab sentiment of the press, students, and professors. There seemed to be a green light for liberals to vent racist attacks and slurs against Arabs, using all the familiar epithets previously reserved for blacks and Mexicans.

I can't recall anyone speaking up for the Palestinians, who, after all, had lost their homeland, leaving the majority of them refugees or scattered in exile. Most of my friends, including Louis, were indifferent to the situation or were focused on Vietnam. Some even believed that the United States, in order to create a smokescreen for atrocities in Vietnam, abetted the whole Mideast situation. On the contrary, I sometimes thought that the war against Vietnam was fomented by the United States to create a smokescreen for every other evil act it was committing in the world and at home.

I began planning a summer trip to London to assume Audrey's role. I decided to drive across the country and leave from New York. I began the road trip two weeks before the flight, following the itinerary Audrey and I had planned the year before. By advertising for riders at UCLA, I found a British film student who had a ticket on the same charter flight.

So began the first of what would become many road trips crisscrossing the North American continent. The first half of the trip was on Route 66, the familiar mother road to Oklahoma. I had crossed that way three times in a car and twice on a bus, but this trip was the first time that I was at the wheel of my own car. As I drove across the New Mexico Painted Desert, I found myself singing softly, "This land is your land, this land is my land . . .," the Woody Guthrie alternative anthem that was enjoying a revived popularity. It made me think, no, this is *not* your land. I was driving through the Navajo Nation as a guest, not an owner. I wondered how the Navajos or other Indians would feel about that song. Another song came to my mind, the old union tune from my grandfather's time, "Which Side Are You On?"

I paused in Oklahoma City. The morning after stopping at a motel near the state capitol building, I slipped out alone and drove the twenty-five miles northwest to Piedmont, the tiny rural community where I grew up. I had not been there for ten years and I wanted to confront the horror and nightmares of my last year there. I arrived, by strange coincidence, on my mother's birthday. On this date in 1953, the Rosenbergs had been exc-

cured, an event that profoundly affected me as I listened to news about it on the radio and saw the fear in my parents' eyes. I had connected the execution with my mother's turn to drinking and the ensuing violence that began a few months after that. She always drank in secret while continuing to attend the Baptist church and Christian temperance meetings. I was the only one to experience her deranged violence that last year at home alone with her. Now she was fifty-nine years old.

As I drove slowly down that familiar red dirt road, I saw a frail, bent, gray-haired figure in the front yard. She did not resemble my mother as she had been when I last saw her, with dark hair and powerful arms, shoulders, and legs. She was cutting back the irises—we called them "flags"—that ringed the small yard. She had always planted flowers, usually flags and morning glories, nothing exotic like roses and violets that had a hard time looking like they were supposed to in arid western Oklahoma. I stopped the car and watched, slouched down behind the steering wheel. I did not even consider getting out of the car to greet her. I felt like I was looking at my demon and retaking the power it had sucked from me in nightmares and repressed memories. I felt relief for having survived and for the fact that she could never again harm me. That was the last time I saw her. A year later, she died, alone, inside that house.

A terrible loneliness overtook me while driving back to Oklahoma City. I had no family and no place to which to return and find comfort. I was an orphan, and I had abandoned my own child. I had lost one dear friend and another was dying, and I no longer trusted my companion of three years. I came close to panic, but then I experienced an overwhelming sense of myself alone, not needing anyone or anything, as an outlaw or vagabond. I saw my destiny and I was no longer afraid.

The drive east from Oklahoma City was new territory for me—Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, as I followed my ancestors' trek in the opposite direction. My rider, who had asked for no special favors on the entire trip, wanted to see a slave plantation, so I decided to stop at The Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's plantation outside of Nashville, Tennessee. As we walked through the marble halls surrounded by lies

about democracy and valor, I told Gina how the slave-owning, Indian killer general/president had become rich and powerful, an early American success story. Penniless at twenty, Jackson saved his money and bought one slave, and struck out over the Cumberland Mountains for Tennessee. He squatted illegally in Cherokee Territory, and because he couldn't afford to buy more than one African slave, he bought a fifteen-year-old girl and sired his own slave laborers. I joked, "That's what they call pulling yourself up by your jockstraps in the United States."

Gina didn't get the joke and probably didn't believe my story. "Bootstraps, you know, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps," but she was unfamiliar with the metaphor. "It's true," I said.

We drove on, climbing into the Appalachian Mountains, spending the night in a run-down clapboard hotel on the bank of the Ohio River. I knew the area was depressed and the people poor, the countryside mutilated from coal mining, but I had no idea how bad conditions really were. There were no jobs and people were leaving in droves, migrating to Cincinnati and Chicago and Detroit. Some of the towns we passed through were abandoned or only very old people remained. Families that had remained were very visibly poor, the children with distended stomachs, wearing tattered clothes and no shoes. Throwaway people, losers in the deadly game of capitalism.

When I reached New York, I found myself hanging out with the "in crowd." My primary guide to Manhattan's Summer of Love culture had been an editor of the UCLA student newspaper before moving to New York. I hadn't known him in L.A., but a mutual friend suggested I call him. Lawrence Dietz was one of the pioneers of something being called "the new journalism," or "point of view" journalism, a more subjective style with the human touch. He was working on a new hip magazine called *Cheetah*, which had the misfortune of appearing at the same time as *Rolling Stone*; *Cheetah* didn't survive the competition. Later he joined the editorial team of *New York Magazine*, a Clay Felker project.

Larry took me along while researching his stories. He also managed to show me all the sights, from Coney Island to Greenwich Village. Among

my interesting encounters that summer were a dinner with writer Tom Wolfe and another evening with entertainment critic Robert Christgau. I also sat in on a wacky interview Larry conducted with the members of Moby Grape, who had just released their first album. I left the club with an autographed album hot off the vinyl press. But I had not heard of most of the celebrities he introduced me to.

We flew to Boston together to do research for one of Larry's stories. Larry had graduated from Brandeis and knew the Boston area well. In a rented convertible with the top down, we cruised around, visiting the campuses of some of the many universities in the area. We ate fresh fish in a Bayside restaurant, and then explored Massachusetts Avenue between MIT and Harvard in Cambridge. I liked everything about the Boston area, and the thought crossed my mind that I might live and teach there someday. Little did I imagine that I would be doing just that in exactly a year.

The whirlwind week with Larry's guidance, lovmaking, and good spirits lifted mine, and I was reluctant to go when the time came to leave for Paris. I sat with Gina on the plane and we shared our New York stories. Most of mine were too esoteric and confusing to explain, so I gave up on talk about pop culture, obscure rock bands with strange names, and the soon-to-be-released movie, *Bonnie and Clyde*. I told Gina about going to Coney Island and my tour of the United Nations and the Guggenheim Museum, a boat trip around Manhattan. Her stories were nearly identical. We parted ways in Paris as she changed planes to fly to London. Our plan was to meet up again in mid-September when we would be on the same plane returning to the United States and would drive across the country together again.

I stayed in Paris for a week with Fred Michelman and Lynn Barak, who were graduate students at UCLA, Fred in the French department, Lynn in art history. Both had research fellowships for a year in Paris. Lynn's teenage sister, Sara, was also visiting from Los Angeles. They knew how I felt about Audrey so they were very supportive, yet they made me laugh and I enjoyed myself in their company. It was a lovely introduction to Paris, a city and a myth that I found fascinating but intimidating. I

arrived just in time for Bastille Day and I stood in the crowds to catch sight of Charles de Gaulle. Sara and I stood in line waiting to get into the opera house, free for the special annual performance for the masses. We sprinted to the box seats and gawked around the gorgeous interior during the performance of *Carmen*.

Yet the Six-Day War did cast its shadow over the fun. Every day at the market, I was reminded that practically all of the fruit and vegetables we bought were imported from Israel; I honored a boycott of Israeli products as I did those from South Africa and the United Farm Workers grape boycott. The conflict was on everyone's mind, and Lynn and Fred were strongly pro-Israel. They were nonobservant Jews, but they were Zionists nevertheless. I did not intend to argue with them, but they annoyed me with their disdain for all Arabs, most of whom were working-class Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians. There were widespread physical attacks on Arabs all over Europe during the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in Paris that summer they had fear in their eyes. It amazed me that people who considered themselves liberal and tolerant felt so free to disparage Arabs. I was beginning to realize that politics would cloud personal relationships for the rest of my life.

London: At last a life I had longed for, not the "swinging London" of 1967 that I caught only glimpses of, but rather a life surrounded by revolutionaries and their supporters who lived in a "movement house" of the African National Congress. I quickly came to see myself as a political radical, a leftist, and a revolutionary. New radical perceptions jolted, stabbed, and slammed me on a daily basis, and I finally understood why Audrey had become so radicalized that she was willing to risk her life.

I found it difficult to have a private conversation with Martin. He was already in love with another woman and was probably trying to let go of his obsession with Audrey. I stayed in the tiny room that had been Audrey's workplace; I sat at her desk, used her typewriter, and slept in her narrow bed. I read Martin's eulogy that he had given at Audrey's memorial, knowing that Martin had said all there was to say, and that I could no longer blame him or the ANC for Audrey's death.

Audrey was not the usual image of a revolutionary: she was neither fearless nor fanatical. She made mistakes. Yet she was, by the way she lived, by the way she touched people, a revolutionary person. She could communicate with people, understand them, see through them, show them themselves, above all love them, as individuals—and through this would imperceptibly change them and enrich them. Because somehow, in some mysterious way, she had escaped all the pretence and falsity and convention that shackle most of us, she was able to move others to do the same. She was against establishments, and she broke the rules of all the “games we play”: “there are no oughts, only is’s” she once said to me.

Because she was this kind of person her death is, quite simply, a loss to the world, and a deep loss to those whom she encountered. She spoke out, though rarely publicly, against much cant during her life, felt compassion for much suffering, hated much oppression. Through some accident or fate, she died in mid-stride, expressing through involvement her attitude to South Africa: South Africa should be honoured.

Reading Martin’s eulogy made me realize the enormity of the burden I had assumed in trying to emulate Audrey. It would have been easier had the task demanded selflessness and rigidity. Instead, I would have to master a love of life and compassion and stop caring about what people thought of me.

I began to long for solitude. I had not been alone nor had a space of my own for weeks. Martin’s girlfriend Hilary was staying with Martin most nights, so I was able to sublet her room in a large flat of an old house in charming Hampstead. The room had a fireplace and a small writing nook at the window that overlooked a quiet residential street. Two blocks down a steep path was the small shopping district with a bakery, grocery store, butcher, pharmacy, laundry, bank, post office, tearoom, and a pub, everything one would ever need right there.

Hilary had left a trunk of clothes in the room and told me to wear any-

thing I wanted. There were surplus military trousers and shirts, band jackets, skirts and tops from India, lace-up granny boots and combat boots, berets, and canvas shoulder bags. Hilary, like many young and swinging Londoners, carried on a continual trade in clothes and books at second-hand and army surplus shops from the street market in West London’s Portobello Road. I laid out the clothes I had brought—several stylish knee-length skirts, two-piece suits, cotton shifts in several colors, several pairs of low-heeled pumps, sandals, and purses. Hilary’s clothes and boots fit me, but I felt like a slob or a slut when I tried them on. I didn’t have the nerve to go out in public wearing combat boots and an army coat or a snug-fitting knit miniskirt that looked like a slightly extended T-shirt. I suddenly recognized my obsession with my public image, with makeup and new clothes and shoes. My sister’s voice telling me how to dress screamed in my brain—“decent, proper, appropriate, well-groomed.”

On the second morning in my new room, I woke at around 8 A.M. and dashed down the stairs to get the bottle of milk that was delivered to me daily. When I opened the outside door, a blast of cold wind swept past me and slammed shut the upstairs door. I was locked out wearing a man’s shirt, had no money, my hair was uncombed, teeth unbrushed, no makeup. I had no idea where either of the owners of the house worked, and I had no coins to call Martin. I sat down on the top stair, hugged my knees, and cried. Then I drank milk out of the bottle, embarrassed, even though no one was watching. I couldn’t recall ever having been so helpless, not since having asthma as a child. But I was not sick, and not truly helpless. I realized then how dependent I was on the shield of clothes, makeup, and appearances.

I knew that several hours had passed when gnawing hunger pains began. I feared a migraine and I needed to pee. To hell with how I look, I told myself. I decided to walk to the shopping street. It was lunchtime as the pub was open. I stared at the people inside, eating, drinking, and talking with friends. A male voice behind me asked: “Do you live around here?” I turned around to face a young black man about my age wearing blue work clothes.

“I stay around the corner,” I said.

"But you are American?" he said. My accent, of course.
 "Yes, where are you from?" I asked, noting his accent.

"I was born in London. My parents migrated here from Trinidad," he said.

I had hoped he might be South African—it seemed that everyone I met in London was—and that he might know Martin and call him for me. I remembered that I was undressed and turned to walk away.

"May I invite you for a cup of tea?" His voice was kind. Perhaps he thought I was a bum, or drunk, or on drugs, and he was a missionary. Whatever the motivation, I couldn't pass up the offer.

"Thanks, I could use it."

We walked down to the tiny tearoom. I used the WC and joined him at a small table by the window. He had ordered tea and cheese sandwiches. I ate as slowly as I could.

The man neither asked my name nor told me his. He pulled a paperback book out of his shirt pocket and handed it to me. "Have you read this?" It was *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon. I told him that I had heard of Fanon through Sartre's writings, but hadn't read the book.

"Please keep it and read it. Fanon was a West Indian, like me, but from the French colony of Martinique. He was a medical doctor and a psychiatrist, but more importantly, he was a revolutionary," he said. "Now I must go, good to meet you." He stuck a five-pound note under the sugar bowl and left. I began to read Fanon:

If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and America into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us.

But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries.

If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe.

Moreover, if we wish to reply to the expectations of the people of Europe, it is no good sending them back a reflection, even an ideal reflection, of their society and their thought with which from time to time they feel immeasurably sickened.

For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new human being.

Fanon argued that culture was dynamic and could be transformed by struggles in which people individually and collectively assumed full responsibility for their destiny.

When the landlord returned, he found me on the steps reading. I went to my room and packed away my clothes and makeup, and for the rest of the summer I dressed out of Hilary's trunk of secondhand clothes.

Observing the work, commitment, and sense of collective responsibility of the ANC activists, I felt that I was witnessing Fanon's dream of humanity advancing a step. I had noticed certain responsible qualities in Martin over the three years I had known him, but I had thought he was an unusual individual. Now I was meeting dozens like him, each with unique personalities and tastes, but each committed, hardworking, and assuming collective responsibility.

The African National Congress originated early in the century, at about the same time that W.E.B. DuBois created the NAACP in the United States. Like the NAACP, the ANC sought integration and welcomed whites and Asians as members. The ANC spearheaded legal, non-violent campaigns against racial discrimination for decades. It was originally led by lawyers and other professionals like Nelson Mandela, but by 1960, the organization had been banned and most of its members were in prison or in exile. The apartheid system was in place and the Verwoerd regime had broken ties with the British Commonwealth. At this point, the ANC formed an armed wing named *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, simply called the MK. The MK, like the ANC, welcomed white partic-

ipants, but its rival, the nationalistic Pan-African Congress (PAC) allowed no white members. Their slogan was "one settler, one bullet" and, under the leadership of Potlake Leballo, they had started an armed wing called Pogo, meaning "alone." Between 1961 and 1963, MK successfully carried out over 200 acts of sabotage, mostly blowing up government property, power plants, and rail lines. Assassination and civilian targets were forbidden. Many of the exiles I was meeting had served in the MK, and many of them had been apprehended and tortured.

A memorial for the recently deceased leader of the African National Congress, Albert Lithuli, brought together the exiled South African community and their British supporters. Despite the rivalry between the ANC and the PAC, Chief Luthuli was universally revered. He had served as executive of the ANC from 1952 until his death in 1967, but his work was limited because he was restricted to his home under house arrest during most of that time. But his courage and persona were powerful symbols of the struggle, and in 1961 he had been awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize.

The Quaker meeting house where the memorial was held was filled with people of all ages and colors. Individuals gave testimonials and told stories about the venerated chief and his courage, about how their lives changed after meeting him or hearing him speak. Others spoke of Nelson Mandela, the ANC lawyer who was in prison in South Africa, and about other comrades in prison. I was moved by the power of the words and by the dedication and sacrifices those South Africans had made, but most of all I felt I was part of a community and I experienced its strength. I could understand why Audrey had risked her life for the cause, why she took money and messages to those exiles' kin and gathered information that could support the banned and imprisoned activists. Until that point I'd believed that I had to choose between individual independence and the suffocating family. Now I'd discovered a third choice—community. But my romantic picture of the perfect revolution began to develop cracks that became windows to reality.

Every evening, I would meet Martin and Hilary at a pub where South

Africans—black, white, and Asian, ANC, PAC, and even anti-ANC mercenaries—gathered, along with locals who supported the ANC. I soon became aware of the political fissures in the ANC that dispelled my illusions of unity and comradeship.

A major split was imminent among many young black nationalists in the ANC who had embraced Maoism. I was vaguely familiar with racial factionalism in the United States. In the United States, Maoists taunted Communist Party speakers at campus teach-ins against the Vietnam War, and they were becoming dominant in the independent leftist Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). I followed Martin's counsel and did not take sides in the arguments. I hadn't formed an opinion about China and Maoism, although I didn't consider the Soviets, dominant in the ANC, exemplary. Martin had strong opinions, calling the South African Maoists "sectarian, adventurous, and racist." He thought that the apartheid regime's counterinsurgency program was sponsoring the Maoists in hope that they might divide and weaken the ANC. The PAC was becoming Maoist, and they took a strong black nationalist position condemning the inclusion of white and Asian South Africans in the ANC. Even some of the young South African whites in exile leaned toward their position. When I pointed that out to Martin, he said: "Sure, black nationalism allows them to feel free of responsibility, you know, let the blacks do the fighting and we won't object or interfere or do anything."

I continued to meet Martin and others in the evening and had long talks with Raymond Kunene, the ANC's official representative in Great Britain. My admiration for them did not diminish, but I was increasingly troubled by the role of women. Hilary and I were usually the only women at the pub. There was Pallo Jordan's American girlfriend, Helen Krizder, who felt as I did about how women were treated. Pallo and Martin were better than most but still took their male superiority for granted.

"Do you regard women in the ANC as equal?" I asked Raymond one evening at dinner.

"More than equal: superior. Women are the mothers, the center of life, our sustenance. They create and mold the future generation."

I didn't express my disagreement that a woman could be defined only by reproduction; rather I queried, "But why do they not speak at events? Why are they always cleaning and typing instead of organizing? Why are there no women in the ANC leadership?"

"They don't want to be leaders. They are content in their role."

"Separate but equal?" I said.

"Yes, separate but equal." He didn't seem to register the irony and hypocrisy in that statement.

That conversation disturbed me. The black ANC women stayed home caring for the children while the men organized and socialized with white English women. I met Hilda Bernstein, an older Jewish South African communist whose husband was imprisoned with Mandela, and I asked her the same question. She was quick to agree that male chauvinism was rampant, but said that the problem would have to wait until after apartheid was destroyed. I missed meeting Ruth First, also in the South African Communist Party and married to MK commander Joe Slovo. There were a few strong women, but for them the struggle against apartheid came first, the liberation of women having to wait. I wrote Louis about my status as a woman and a revolutionary:

These are the worst male chauvinists I have ever encountered, and they are supposedly leftist radicals. After being called a "bird" for the hundredth time, I told a fellow to fuck off at a party last week—caused an awful scene, really. I have started referring to men as "bats"—it has caught on rather well. I think they all think I am quite mad or just American, synonymous in their lobotomized brains. When it's all said and done it will still be a man's world—I see no change in that direction, and I don't want anything to do with anyone's societal phallic structures. I dearly hope that the wretched of the earth slay their pompous, phallic masters, but I have no masters to slay—my enemy is existence, and my only solution is to exist, but in movement. I have followed others all my life, because I have no direction, and everyone else always seems to

know what they want and where they are going. I am not going to follow anyone anymore.

A two-week event titled "Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation—Towards a Demystification of Violence" further escalated my growing resentment about women's roles on the Left.

The Congress opened with speeches by its organizers, Scotsman R.D. (Ronnie) Laing and South African David Cooper, both radical psychotherapists. It was a strange affair. Daily the Roundhouse was packed with mostly white men of all ages and worldviews. *Monthly Review* editor Paul Sweezy spoke and circulated in the crowd, as did Belgian Marxian theorist Ernest Mandel. The speaker who impressed me the most was the Trinidad-born sage and Marxist historian, C.L.R. James, who had the misfortune of following his fellow countryman Stokely Carmichael to the podium. Stokely had also been born in Trinidad but grew up in New York. He no longer spoke the Caribbean dialect, but his peculiar style of repetitive oratory suggested it. And at the end of every thought he repeated the last few words, as a sort of chorus:

And the resistance to doing anything meaningful about institutionalized racism stems from the fact that western society enjoys its luxury from institutionalized racism, and therefore, were it to end institutionalized racism, it would in fact destroy itself, destroy itself, destroy itself.

Stokely was mesmerizing and brought the audience to its feet in chants and cheers. C.L.R. James, in contrast, spoke to a quiet audience that applauded politely only at the end of his speech. As a fellow black Caribbean, James subtly chided Stokely for his black nationalist hyperbole and call to arms; he spoke of a revolution based on class.

My friend David, one of the South African exiles, pointed out the local, well-known Marxists attending the session, including Perry Anderson and Robin Blackburn, publishers of *New Left Review* and who

later founded Verso Books. Pakistani-born Tariq Ali, who would become editor of one of the most influential New Left publications, the *Black Dwarf*, was there as well.

The few women present at the Congress were either on the arms of some of the men or they were serving food and helping in other ways. Not only was the Congress male-dominated with not a single female speaker, but it was also overwhelmingly white, and the only time any blacks were there was to hear Stokely Carmichael and C.R.L.-James speak.

In that small group of blacks was a tall, elegant black woman with a huge Afro that definitely made a political statement. Angela Davis was with Herbert Marcuse, the chairman of her doctoral committee at the University of California, San Diego, and one of the invited Congress speakers. By that time, I was used to hearing Marcuse speak, but such occasions were always thrilling. Silver-haired and slightly stooped, he captivated audiences of young leftists all over Europe and North America. His most accessible works—*Reason and Revolution*, *One-Dimensional Man*, and *Eros and Civilization*—synthesized the essence of the great nineteenth-century German thinkers—Hegel, Marx, and Freud. Every time I'd heard him speak at UCLA, Marcuse drew huge crowds and commanded rapt attention, speaking in a heavy German accent, somber and professorial. In 1965, he had left his position at Brandeis for the relatively new campus of the University of California at San Diego, where he was able to create a new curriculum and an innovative doctoral program in the history of philosophy. San Diego, however, was one of the most vigilantly anti-communist havens in the United States, populated by active and retired military officers and with major navy and marine bases that became central to the Vietnam War buildup. The San Diego authorities and the newly elected California governor, Ronald Reagan, did everything within legal limits to get Marcuse fired, and their terrorist kindred threatened his life and property. Marcuse never budged nor responded; he was a gift we may or may not have deserved.

On the day of Stokely's session, a familiar-looking black man took the podium and spoke briefly. "Who is that speaker?" I asked David. He told

me the man was Michael X, a West Indian leader in London. Suddenly I remembered: He was the anonymous man who had rescued me when I locked myself out of the flat. I wanted to thank him and return his money, but as soon as he finished speaking he disappeared, and I didn't spot him again. In her autobiography, published in 1974 after her release from prison, Angela Davis mentioned Michael X's presence at the Congress and gave an account of the tour he conducted for her and Stokely and the other U.S. black militants through London's West Indian community of Brixton. After the visitors left, Michael X was arrested for inciting to riot and spent over a year in prison. Later, he would return to Trinidad, where he was framed for two murders. Despite an influential defense movement—including Kate Millett, John Lennon, and Yoko Ono—and excellent legal representation, he was found guilty and hanged three years later. At the time, Trinidad was a British dominion, and Britain could have intervened, but it seemed that Britain wanted Michael X dead.

Martin and Hilary showed up now and then at the Congress. We met with Frank Joyce, who accompanied Stokely Carmichael. Frank was a Detroit native, active in trade unionism and civil rights and had recently started an organization, People Against Racism (PAR), to raise consciousness about white supremacy among whites. It had Stokely's stamp of approval. Martin had decided to take a teaching offer from the University of California at Santa Barbara, and we tentatively planned to invite Frank out to speak on our campuses.

Frank, like Stokely, left the conference early when the Detroit riots broke out. Uprisings in the urban ghettos of the United States demanded attention during the Congress. Before Detroit, the Newark, New Jersey, ghetto had blown up for five days of fighting, leaving two dozen dead. Inner-city revolts of briefer duration flared in fifty-seven other northern cities in the United States that summer. I wrote to Louis about the Congress:

In the first days, the theme was mystical, emphasizing the personal experience of LSD, Zen, etc., and relating the personal to

political and social liberation movements. Allen Ginsberg, Laing and Cooper guided all the events. It seemed like just another happening, then the Dutch Provos and Emmett Grogan of the San Francisco Diggers—they believe in doing away with money and burn money in public—ran the show and promoted anarchism, questioned the structure. Then Marcuse spoke, and more and more revolutionary theorists and practitioners. Stokely Carmichael spoke passionately: "No Vietnamese ever called me nigger!" He left the same day because the Detroit riots broke out. John Gerassi announced that Regis Debray had made contact with Ché in Bolivia and was under arrest.

The Congress went on all day and evening for two weeks non-stop. We ate there, lived there practically. In the evenings, rock groups performed, the only one I'd heard of before being Eric Burdon and the Animals. The sensation I best recall is Ginsberg chanting and reading his poetry, playing his squeezebox. He controlled the mood and emotions of the 2000 or so people, creating chaos now, calm then, asking the telling questions, and yet quiet, unobtrusive. But always as a background to the heated debates of the politicians and psychiatrists who seemed ego-bound, frustrated in a quest for power—power within the existing structures while talking about liberation.

Those two weeks have had a profound effect on me, positive and negative, the negative being that not one single woman was among the speakers, and when women spoke up to make comments or ask questions, they were interrupted, not taken seriously. Maybe that's why I didn't speak up. Mystics, psychiatrists, anarchists, revolutionaries, are they all alike, just like societies as they are now? How can they ignore the situation of women? Although I learned from them, I do not feel they intended their message for me or any woman.

I suppose I've been in a privileged position for three years at UCLA, being an honorary man practically, and here I'm just another "bird."

A few days after the Congress ended, David and I encountered Allen Ginsberg in Hyde Park talking to a large crowd of flower children. Someone in the crowd around him asked his opinion of Ché Guevara. Ginsberg replied that Ché was uptight, that he should just sit down and get stoned on coca leaf with the Indians in Bolivia.

The questioner grew angry and yelled to the crowd: "The Indians chew coca to numb hunger pains, not for fun, and that's why Ché is there, it's about hunger and disease, not about getting high."

Ginsberg laughed, and said, "I'll bet those are some happy, hungry Indians, chewing coca," and resumed chanting.

I was at a crossroads, where one day the counterculture message of peace and love made sense, and the next it sounded so crass and evil that only violent revolution seemed to offer a solution. The only universal truth I could detect was the absence of women's voices. Anger about that easily translated into a growing hostility toward the men in my life.

Daily letters arrived from Louis in L.A. and Larry in New York. Louis awaited my return to our old life; Larry had planned my career as a celebrity neophyte with him as my agent and lover. In my letters to Louis, the drift was clear:

I wonder seriously about us. We have learned so much from each other, or I have from you anyway, but where do we go from here? I wonder if we won't limit each other terribly?

I have done much thinking, and clearly, a stable life will not do for me.

I don't want to climb the ranks of academia. We are living in a time of revolution and I am unquestionably on the side of the revolutionaries. There is nothing in this western society that I particularly treasure and much that is disgusting. I have nothing but contempt for bourgeois pleasures and dreams and objects that drain 3/4 of the world and leave the majority in utter misery. I want it to crash.

As my departure date neared, Raymond Kunane began trying to persuade me to stay and work in the solidarity movement, perhaps working in South Africa as Audrey had. I was flattered and at first felt I had no choice if indeed I was committed to follow Audrey's example. And Raymond's argument was irrefutable—I was only one person among millions working against the Vietnam War and for civil rights in the United States, but there were so few working in the anti-apartheid solidarity movement that my work would really make a difference, as had Audrey's.

Every time I started to say yes, I hesitated and thought: There will be no successful revolution without transformation of existing social structures, including those of revolutionary organizations; women must be liberated as a prerequisite. To my knowledge, there was no militant feminist organization in existence. The ANC structure was rigid, and women—especially foreign women—wouldn't be able to change it from within. Someone—some women—had to launch a female liberation movement. Finally, when the opportunity to leave early arose, I did not hesitate to do so. I told Raymond I would think about his proposal while I was traveling.

Another close California friend of Audrey's had arrived in London after traveling in Europe. Anita was planning a train trip to Switzerland to visit a man from Geneva, and she persuaded me to go with her. What interested me was that her boyfriend was part of a group sheltering U.S. army deserters from European bases. Non-NATO countries like Sweden, France, and Switzerland turned a blind eye to their presence; in the case of Sweden, cabinet minister Olof Palme, who became the prime minister in 1969, publicly welcomed deserters and even led an anti-Vietnam War march to the U.S. embassy.

We arrived in the Geneva train station after twenty hours of delays and overcrowded trains, triggered by the end of the French August vacation. Anita called her boyfriend, and he arrived in minutes. We walked to an apartment only seven blocks away from the train station on the left bank of the Rhône River. Snow-capped Mont Blanc loomed in front of us as we walked down the street named after it. I thought I might be in Shanghai. The large flat overlooking the Rhône belonged to the vacationing par-

ents of the young man. There were other young people there, talking in French and listening to the Rolling Stones. Marijuana filled the air.

Many young Swiss men were refusing compulsory national military service in solidarity with their American counterparts and faced possible long jail sentences. Our Swiss friends took us to several apartments to meet U.S. soldiers who had deserted their European military bases. Bored, homesick, and afraid for their futures, they told us about the desertion of entire U.S. units based in Europe.

Climbing the steep, cobbled Grand Rue to the old walled city, I stopped at markers indicating houses where Madame de Stahl, Rousseau and Voltaire, Calvin and Neckar had lived, telling a history I had read only in texts—about Jean Calvin's French Protestant refugees ruling Geneva as a theocracy and about Enlightenment salon society. "Very few visitors show interest in our city's history," one of the young women remarked when I asked her questions about Geneva. She led us on the trail of Lenin and showed me the garrets where he had plotted revolution while living in exile, just before he took a train back to Russia and led the October Revolution. We ended at Lenin's favorite café, the Languedoc, below the Old City wall, where he had passed many hours meeting with revolutionaries from all over the world. We sat at his favorite table and drank coffee.

The evening we left for Paris, news came about an armed uprising in northern New Mexico led by a Mexican-American named Reies Tijerina whose organization, the Alianza, was demanding the return of land taken from the subsistence Mexican farmers by the United States when they invaded and lopped off the northern half of Mexico. The United States had turned the land into federal property later used for the designing, manufacturing, testing, and storage of atomic bombs, hacking out uranium from the surrounding bluffs, spreading radiation to every stream and particle of dust. I had never heard of the movement or of Tijerina before, but I sensed its significance.

Contemplating the meaning of armed revolt happening so close to my birthplace, I walked alone along the Rhône to the spot where it spills

into Lake Geneva with Mont Blanc shimmering above. As darkness fell, colored lights necklaced the lake. I pondered my future in secure and beautiful Geneva that calls itself the city of refuge. Reluctantly, I decided that I must return to the United States and struggle from there.

The same American students were on the charter plane as had been on our trip coming over. Gina and I sat together, discussing our plans for driving back to Los Angeles. We agreed to take a northern route to see new parts of the country, and I wanted to pass through post-riot Detroit. She suggested we go first to Montreal for the Expo and pick up her friend Clairmont, who would ride back with us. But first we decided to spend a few days in New York.

Larry was disappointed that I hadn't written a book proposal as he had suggested, and he gave me a pep talk. He had set up meetings with editors and another one with Tom Wolfe, though I wasn't sure why since when we did meet Wolfe seemed uninterested in everything related to Okies. He gave me a copy of Stokely Carmichael's *Black Power* and I jumped at his request that I write a review of it for *New York Magazine*.

We went to see *Bonnie and Clyde*, which both disturbed and thrilled me. It was my parents' time and place, that time of the depression—Bonnie and Clyde, chased by Texas Rangers, county sheriffs, finally betrayed, ambushed, and riddled with bullets from machine guns, their bodies displayed for gawking crowds in Dallas. I was not alive during that terrible time, but my older brother and sister remembered the depression and Dust Bowl days well; it was a shared experience that marked their lives. I had grown up in the shadow of their and my parents' fears, and there it was, the emotional experience, on the movie screen. Yet, all of that was in the background of the film, almost subliminal. The foreground was farce, a romantic comedy. The connection between the anger that led to violence and violence to death-defying fun was not made. The story of the poor white Okies, the disinherited descendants of the "American dream," had to be told. Maybe I would have to tell that story, I thought, walking out of the theater. Afterward, I was quiet, sitting in a

restaurant with Larry and a half dozen critics, listening to their enraptured commentary on my childhood heroes. I had found the film profoundly sad, and I couldn't understand how they viewed the film as a hilarious adventure.

Quebec was a day's drive through New York State. I knew nothing of contemporary French Canada and its militant independence movement, but soon I was in the middle of it. Gina's friend, Clairmont, had invited us to stay in his home and had managed to procure tickets for us to the sold-out World Expo. Clairmont's family lived in a small apartment in a tenement near the docks. His father was a dockworker and his mother took in laundry and stayed home caring for the half dozen children. Clairmont was the oldest and the first in the community to attend a university. Even though they had only three rooms, they insisted that Gina and I take a whole room to ourselves. They spoke little English, but Clairmont translated for us, and they took every opportunity to educate us about the movement for Quebec independence. They were riding high on the thrill of French president Charles de Gaulle's visit a month earlier when he proclaimed, "Quebec pour les Quebecois!" They told the story repeatedly.

Ordinarily I avoided fairs, parades, shows, and any spectacle with crowds of people and long lines, but I could not disappoint Clairmont by refusing his ticket. I wandered around alone, depressed, as Gina and Clairmont waited in the line to enter the U.S. Pavilion, a Buckminster Fuller-designed geodesic dome. I did not want to see it. We agreed to meet in two hours outside the U.S. site. I sought out the Cuba pavilion. The building was impressive—made of several large, randomly stacked Plexiglas blocks. Inside, black-and-white photo montages were accompanied by stereophonic electronic sound. The message was revolution. Remarkable Cuban-made documentary films were screened continuously in two areas. I had expected doctrinaire greyness but I found the Cultural Revolution in vivid black and white.

At the appointed time, Gina and Clairmont were not where they said they would be outside the U.S. pavilion. There was no longer a line, so I

went in to look for them. I encountered giant, grainy blowups of photographs of Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando (as a motorcycle king), and Humphrey Bogart. Everything was glitzy Hollywood culture, belying the fact that the United States was bombing a small, rural Asian country "back to the stone age," and committing acts of genocide. What a stark contrast between the smart and original Cuban world and the U.S. house of deception.

We drove through Ontario to the U.S. border and headed for Detroit and Twelfth Street, which had been the center of the uprising a month before. The site of looting and fires was a no-man's land. *Time's* cover story told of pitched battles with guns and knives. Governor Romney had sent in 10,000 National Guardsmen, and President Johnson had sent army paratroopers. Forty-three black civilians were killed and 7,000 arrested. Property damage was estimated at \$22 million. I knew that was the part of Detroit where Audrey had gone as a young girl to listen to the blues in the run-down clubs. I wondered how she would feel about the event that took place in her big city. We spent the night in Grand Rapids, where Audrey was born and raised, but I couldn't picture her there.

After visiting the seething campuses of the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin, where plans for the October antiwar activities were well under way, we headed west. After four days on the road with me driving and Gina beside me, Clairmont in the backseat reading aloud from Marx's *Capital* and Ché's *Guerrilla Warfare*, eating takeout Kentucky Fried Chicken, and spending nights in motels, we were back to our temporary home, Los Angeles.

The murder of Ché Guevara soon after I returned to Los Angeles affected me almost as profoundly as the death of Audrey a few months before. I felt I was trapped in a flashback of the agony of acknowledging that Audrey was dead. In April 1967, a message from Ché Guevara, from "somewhere in Latin America," had been published in Havana. He explained why he had left his family, his life, and his beloved adopted country (Cuba) to open a guerrilla front in another land. He explained

in great detail his motives, which were summed up in his call to "create two, three, many Vietnams." It was his last message. I read and reread every fact of Ché's life that week of his death.

On October 9, 1967, Ché was ambushed, wounded, captured, and murdered in a rural one-room schoolhouse in the Bolivian jungle. His bullet-riddled body was displayed for the locals and the press to observe, to leave no doubt as to the fact of his death.

Ché's diaries from his nearly two years in the Bolivian jungle chronicle one disaster after another: betrayal by the official communist parties, logistical nightmares, lack of support among the sparse local population, and above all, running out of asthma medication, slowly dying from asthma in the thin, damp air. I asked myself then, and still wonder, having been an invalid with asthma throughout my own childhood, how did he do it? How did he continue to the end? He never surrendered, and his last words were reportedly, "Shoot me, don't be afraid," to the Bolivian officer sent in to carry out the summary execution. *No se rinde, no se vende*. I would later learn that Cuban revolutionary slogan and adopt it as my own. Never surrender, never sell out. No surrender.

The authorities at the time knew even better than we did the meaning of Ché: the importance of his existence, free, uncaptured, outside the law. And they were right, for though we could claim a lasting legacy and resolve to redouble our efforts, his death was a terrible blow. Fidel said, "Turn setbacks into victories," but the enormity of the empire was overwhelming. How Ché's location in the jungle was pinpointed revealed the CIA's obsession with eliminating him and their power to do so. The CIA had in its possession one of the ingenious smokeless camp stoves that the Cuban revolutionaries had devised. The U.S. Army commissioned the creation of an electronic sensor that would detect the stove. Using the sensor, flying low over the thick jungle, Bolivian and U.S. military officers traced the movements of the guerrillas and launched an ambush. Imagine, I told myself; they could invent a specific electronic device to track down and murder each of us. It was then, I believe, that the determined and joyful Summer of Love was darkened. Winters of desperation would follow.

The same month as Ché's death, October 1967, all over the United States and in Canada and Europe, the antiwar movement stepped up dissent. Few campuses were without antiwar events, and the University of Wisconsin Madison campus became a veritable battlefield. The fabled national march on the Pentagon provided the backdrop. UC Berkeley's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapter, along with other antiwar groups, organized a "Stop the Draft Week" against the Oakland Induction Center, closing it down. Ten thousand militants fought the police and California Highway Patrol in hand-to-hand combat for hours, stopping the buses that were transporting inductees. Seven of the organizers were indicted for conspiracy; so "Free the Oakland Seven" became a galvanizing campaign, popularizing draft resistance. Draft card burning that had begun during the Spring Moratorium became a ritual of the antiwar movement.

The Oakland Black Panther Party had gained notoriety by carrying shotguns at a May demonstration at the state capital. Their signature activity had been to patrol the police. When black motorists were routinely stopped for no apparent reason, a group of Panthers would appear, armed with shotguns and law books. In October, they burst into the news again with the death of an Oakland police officer and the shooting of Panther founder, Huey Newton. Huey was charged with murder and held without bail. The "Free Huey" movement mushroomed, spreading from the Bay Area outward nationally, and then worldwide within a short time. The Black Panther Party was anointed the "vanguard" of revolution in the United States.

That fall I threw myself into antiwar organizing. I had never been involved in student government, but I ran for and won a seat on the history department's graduate council in order to have access to its activities fund. I had been promoted to assistant instructor and no longer had to teach under a professor's supervision. I blatantly used the senior seminar that I taught on race, class, and gender in U.S. history to recruit for such antiwar projects on campus as demonstrating against Dow Chemical, the manufacturer of napalm.

The demonstrations on the UCLA campus included a sit-in at the job recruitment center that allowed Dow to recruit on campus. I joined the sit-in for a few hours and signed a petition. Strangely, the next day my name was listed as one of the organizers of the demonstration in the campus newspaper, although I had not attended a single organizing meeting. I was called into the dean's office and was sternly interrogated about my "leadership" role. I explained that I was expressing my right to free speech in signing the petition and demonstrating. The dean asked me if I didn't think that being a leader of the antiwar movement on campus was contradictory to my professional position as an instructor in the history department. I told him that no one in the history department nor my students had complained and that I did not think it was contradictory at all, on the contrary that I was providing a good example of civic duty. But I emphasized that I had not been, in fact, one of the organizers. He asked me if I would be willing to renounce my leadership position, and handed me an already typed letter with my name on it. I realized I was in a no-win situation and refused to sign. His final volley was, "This information will be placed in your permanent personnel file." I said over my shoulder, "good." And so, my name entered the burgeoning blacklist.

Martin had taken a faculty position in the UC Santa Barbara history department. Together we organized a series of events on racism, bringing Frank Joyce from Detroit to both campuses. Our goal was to establish local chapters of People Against Racism (PAR). Almost the entire budget of the history graduate student council was spent on bringing Frank from Detroit and doing the publicity. It was my first real organizing experience, and I was pleased with my work.

Martin and I felt that it was important not to abandon the struggle against racism and apartheid in the consuming antiwar atmosphere. We framed the war itself within the context of European colonialism, from which white supremacy originated. Although Frank had devised some interesting methods for raising consciousness about institutionalized white supremacy, they were mostly based on liberal white guilt. I felt that he asked too little of people when he suggested that they give money to

SNCC and to PAR rather than giving their lives to revolution. It seemed to me that Frank was living in an earlier time, when the idea of revolution in the United States was not even a rumor. I tried to assess Frank's approach objectively, without tainting my views with my strong sense of rage at his attitude and treatment of women—he treated me as something between a chauffeur and a groupie. Although his behavior was typical of movement men, I was on the edge of explosion after having dealt with it in London all summer.

Death and dying were everywhere. My friend, Regie Melden, was dying. Malignant tumors wracked her body and required emergency surgeries, radiation, and chemotherapy. Cancer had attacked the base of her spine and she was now an invalid, paralyzed from the neck down, confined to her house. While I was away that summer, Regie had married a fellow graduate student, Rob Albritton, and they rented a cottage in Santa Monica. Now someone had to be with Regie at all times. Her mother visited often, and Rob worked at home whenever he could. I filled in some of the gaps and spent a great deal of time with Regie that fall. She was trying to continue her studies, and I read to her, took notes, brought books from the library. But she would nod in and out, debilitated by medication. She and Rob were discussing how he should resist the draft, as he would soon complete his doctorate and lose his student deferment. He applied for teaching positions in Canada because he had to consider Regie's condition and couldn't choose prison as an alternative.

I joined my friend Leslie, an English graduate student, in a project she had started—visiting the wounded GIs at the overcrowded VA hospital next to campus. Most were from places far from Los Angeles and had no family or friends to visit them. The majority were black and Latino. We took them books to read, wrote letters they dictated, read their letters from home, and listened to their stories. The most mutilated men were hung outside in the afternoons by hooks attached to leather harnesses. Some were missing arms or legs, eyes or mouths, and some were reduced

to no more than a brain and a torso. Those were the living. The body bags stacked up that fall.

It seemed as if Los Angeles itself was dying. Rain did not arrive as it should have, and the hot Santa Ana winds blew day after day, spreading the smallest fire, a cigarette tossed from a car window, sparks from backyard barbecues. In the canyons, the fire department chopped down all the flammable brush, including my beloved bamboo grove, leaving a dusty hillside outside my window.

Looming over all was the deterioration of my relationship with Louis. My three months away had cracked our tenuous three-year bond. It would sputter on and turn increasingly bitter for another year, a time spent mostly apart during which the relationship always appeared more viable than when we were together. We had both changed significantly. Left on his own, Louis had blossomed in his own way, just as I had in mine, but we had gone in two very different directions. He had spent the summer creating objects of art and even built his own light show. He had also entered the magical world of psychedelia, growing his hair long, boasting a new stereo and a stack of albums of the Beatles, the Stones, the Doors, and Dylan. With missionary zeal, he tried to convert me to his amazing fantasy world. I didn't reject it out of hand, but saw it as entertainment, not life itself, and certainly not revolutionary.

Louis hated my organizing projects and despised Martin and all of my friends, who he blamed for pulling me into the cauldron of politics. And he worried about me, fearing the violence of the police and government that would think nothing of cutting me down. It was hard for him to understand that I didn't care about that. Louis and I were wrestling in a microcosm with what was beginning to be played out on campuses, on the streets, and in homes all over the country—the cultural versus the political. And it was not a fair battle, because we politicians could enjoy the fruits of the counterculture while those who created the psychedelic dream world found radical politics irrelevant.

At Thanksgiving, Louis and I called a truce and drove up the coast to San Francisco to see an old friend of his who was now married. They

had tickets to the Fillmore Ballroom for a show featuring Donovan. That kind of spectacle, a rock show in a huge auditorium without seats, with enormous surreal images projected on the walls, black lights, and strobe lights, was new and wondrous in 1967. I had liked Donovan in a documentary I'd seen about Bob Dylan and I enjoyed his mellow tunes, but that night I found his show ridiculous, in part because he seemed to take himself so seriously as the angelic, androgynous flower child. Wearing a floor-length, pink velvet gown, he fitted around the stage as if in parody of someone. Enraptured fans, including my own party, did not appreciate my uncontrollable laughter.

Those apparently benign two days of overeating and tasting the San Francisco counterculture included the presence of an incongruent element that triggered a major decision in my life. A twenty-five-year-old friend of our hosts had a doctorate in nuclear physics and was employed by Lockheed, a major military contractor for the Vietnam War. Terry's job was to design even more insidious weapons, ones that used elements of nuclear technology. He said he was always stoned at work and went in only when he felt like it. He lived in a commune with San Jose State University antiwar activists, drove a Harley, and wore scuffed cowboy boots and jeans. On payday, after buying enough dope to last until the next paycheck, he gave away the rest of his salary, often throwing \$100 bills into the Diggers' money-burning events in the Haight-Ashbury. Terry embodied a level of disaffection that I had not even imagined possible. I decided then that I had to break away from the security of my life, to have nothing to lose in order to become a permanent revolutionary.

I resigned my teaching position, took out a student loan, and moved back to San Francisco. In 1967, my vow to live like Audrey was joined by a vow to also live like Ché, who said, "the world must not only be interpreted, it must be transformed."

IV 1968

WHEN I ARRIVED in San Francisco in January 1968, it was no longer the home I had known when I moved there fresh out of Oklahoma in 1960, and I found that there was no place for me in the post-Summer of Love city. Rents had skyrocketed as trust-fund kids and celebrities were drawn to the scene, taking all the available decent housing, and not-so-rich hippies made communes out of low-rent apartments. Days of searching for a place to live turned up nothing. Meanwhile, I stayed in Berkeley with Betty and Josh, the Trotskyist couple who had been our first friends in San Francisco. I finally gave up on San Francisco and took a studio a few blocks from them.

My ex-husband had remarried and bought a home in Marin County, the wealthy suburb north of San Francisco, where Michelle would soon begin the first grade. I was delighted that Michelle was content in a stable family situation, and there was no doubt that her stepmother adored her and was an excellent mother. But soon after I had settled into my own place, I received a letter from Jimmy's lawyer asking me to sign an adoption document that would transfer my parental rights to Jimmy's wife. The lawyer's letter said that nothing would change, that the same

informal cooperative visitation rights would continue as before. Jimmy called and apologized that his wife felt insecure being a stepmother and tried to convince me that the adoption was only for her peace of mind. I told him to go to hell, slammed the phone down, and tore up the adoption papers.

Fortunately, I knew something about California adoption law. I knew that the birth parent who granted adoption no longer legally existed as a parent, and that even the birth records were altered. I recognized that Jimmy was trying to obliterate my existence for his own sake, not for his wife, not for Michelle.

A week later, a uniformed sheriff's deputy appeared at my door with a subpoena to appear in court. Jimmy and his wife were now suing for adoption. I could have done nothing, in which case the adoption would have gone through by default. Betty suggested that I consult a lawyer friend who had recently passed the bar and was handling divorce and child custody cases.

Charles Sherman's reaction when I told him the whole story was, "Let's fight the bastard," and we did, and we won. Charles had a wife and a new baby but he devoted two months to the case and charged me nothing. We not only defeated the adoption bid, but the judge punished Jimmy and his wife for bringing a frivolous lawsuit. I was granted full custody of Michelle, which I hadn't even requested. I was happy and relieved, and from that time on during Michelle's minor years, I had unrestricted access to her, although she never lived with me. Soon she had a brother, and then another, and I tried never to disrupt her good family life.

As soon as I had my own apartment, I began looking for a teaching position in the local junior colleges. I found an opening in the history department at City College of San Francisco. I was called in for a series of interviews that eliminated all of the other candidates. My last hurdle was an interview with the president of the college, who himself had a doctorate in early U.S. history. I was certain I would get the job.

On the appointed day, I dressed conservatively and felt confident. The interview went well for nearly an hour, and I began describing the

approach I would take in teaching the American Revolution. I said that I proposed to focus on the economic interests of the founders, which pleased him, as it was a classic approach introduced by historian Charles Beard in the early twentieth century. But I added the observation that the Constitution provided decided advantage to slave owners in electing representatives. When asked to explain, I said, "You know, the three-fifths clause that made each slave count as three-fifths of a person." His eyes clouded and, then he said, "There is no such thing in the Constitution." I thought he had misunderstood me, so I cited and recited the clause:

United States Constitution, in Article I, Section 2, 3rd paragraph: Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.

He was quiet, but he looked like he might explode. Inexplicably he said, "There is nothing in that provision about Negro slaves."

I said, knowing the words would doom me, "'Other persons' means slaves." He rose from his seat, thanked me for the visit, and said the secretary would be in touch with me soon. Needless to say, I didn't get the job.

I had not appreciated the community that nurtured me for three years at UCLA until it was no longer available to me. Now that I was free of demands for my attention, my company, and my involvement in planning and organizing political actions, I felt useless and lonely. One day, David, my young South African friend, arrived from London. He was as displaced and confused as I was, but his quiet presence broke the loneliness that haunted me. We hung out in the Haight-Ashbury and Golden Gate Park, getting to know the Diggers and their work of feeding, clothing,

and housing the poor and homeless youth; preaching and teaching not just *being* free, but everything *for* free. There was always music in the air — conga drums and bells and bands playing for free, an endless be-in.

David and I both had become interested in the Diggers after having heard the founder, Emmett Grogan, speak at the Dialectics of Liberation Congress in London. He had recited the part of Hitler's 1938 Nuremberg speech that called for revolution and people's power. I had recognized the excerpt right away and was curious as to Grogan's intent. It seemed that the mostly young British audience of a thousand or so didn't know their legs were being pulled, and they applauded enthusiastically when Grogan ended, only to be informed that they had been taken. He made his point about learning from the message and not following the messenger.

The Diggers also interested me because they had a penchant for forging alliances with disparate groups, from theater troupes to the Hell's Angels. They had allied with the Black Panther Party even before Huey Newton's imprisonment, which resulted in most of the leftist groups' support of the Panthers. It seemed to me that both the Diggers and the Panthers were attuned to the kind of anarchist, grassroots socialism that had marked the early century's Industrial Workers of the World and the sharecroppers-and-farmers alliances.

The Diggers sought to end the grip of greed and money on the consciousness of those who did not own the means of production nor wield power in the society. The self-consciousness of the Diggers was indicated by their choice of name. The original Diggers banded in mid-seventeenth-century England to oppose the fencing of the commons. They believed that private property and freedom could not coexist. They occupied common lands, working the fields to feed themselves, thereby earning the name that has identified them ever since.

In Berkeley and Oakland, "Free Huey" was the call. I found the militancy and relevance of the Panthers' program irresistible. The Black Panther Party's "10-Point Program" called for black freedom and the power to determine the destiny of the black community. The program demanded jobs, housing, education, an end to white exploitation of the

black community, an end to police brutality, instigation of trials by peer juries, and freedom for incarcerated blacks. Most interesting of all, the Panthers revived a demand enunciated by Malcolm X just before his death—a U.N.-sponsored plebiscite to determine whether blacks wanted to be part of the United States, or form a separate nation. The Panthers began calling their program "intercommunalism."

Being a Marxist, I had a profound desire to expand the black/white paradigm to include Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, and to transcend all of the *isms* to construct a crisp class analysis of U.S. society and an anti-imperialist analysis of U.S. foreign policy, basing the whole mix on the liberation of women. The Diggers and the Panthers, the Chicanos of the Alianza in New Mexico, the Puerto Rican Young Lords, and Native Americans all over the continent were insisting on living their ideas and creating communities that were future-oriented. I went to the UC Berkeley library to read and do research for my dissertation as often as I could, but I was more interested in living history rather than studying it, and this increasingly commanded my attention.

The film *Battle of Algiers* and Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* became tools for raising revolutionary consciousness for the Black Panthers. David and I went to the first San Francisco showing of *Battle of Algiers* with an audience of Black Panthers. Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo re-created the Algerian war of national liberation by mixing black and white newsreel footage with dramatization. The film was made in Algeria with mostly nonprofessional actors. The movie was like a manual for guerrilla warfare, a call to arms.

In Algiers, the European city and the Arab ghetto—the Casbah—comprised two worlds, much like the black ghettos and white suburbs of U.S. cities. The realization that the "casbah" existed in every U.S. city, town, and countryside—not just in the Third World—but also in the U.S. black ghettos, barrios, Chinatowns, and Indian reservations was powerful. For me, it awakened a knowledge that I would find almost as a code among many others I would meet in the coming years that also had seen the film. For those condemned to the casbah, the barrio, the ghetto,

there was no choice; as for the rest of us, we each would have to choose which side of town to inhabit.

The film's appearance coincided with the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam. The National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese Army had seized—all at the same time—thirty-six of forty-four provincial capitals and five of six large cities in South Vietnam. Twenty-three U.S. and South Vietnamese airfields came under the National Liberation Front's control.

The draft resistance movement was gaining credibility as the cost of the war was exposed by the Tet Offensive. After Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara resigned and President Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not run for re-election, the movement continued to build steam. Robert F. Kennedy declared his candidacy on a radical peace platform and Eugene McCarthy, already a peace candidate, was doing well in the primaries. Another draft resistance week was coming up in early April, and Rob and Regie had decided that Rob should burn his draft card.

And then, on Thursday, April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis. King's views had changed considerably during the past year. He had opposed his fellow ministers and openly condemned the U.S. war against Vietnam. He openly supported draft resistance and he talked about class and about race, poverty, and imperialism as the triad of original and continuing sins of the nation. He was organizing the Poor Peoples' Campaign, and was in Memphis to support the striking garbage workers.

Louis called from Los Angeles, terrified. "This country is insane. Nothing is sacred, no one safe. They've killed their only hope. I must leave."

"Yes, you must leave, Louis. You'll go mad here," I said.

"Please come with me to Mexico. I cannot abandon you here. Please, we'll go to Cuba."

Suddenly, it seemed logical and possible that we would go to Cuba—to think, to breathe free, to learn the art of revolution, and perhaps to rescue our relationship.

That night and the following nights, the predicted riots did not materi-

alize in Oakland. The Panthers were out on the streets, organizing and calling for long-term strategy for liberation rather than impassioned uprising. Bobby Seale spoke calmly and strongly over the radio: "Stay at home, think, come to a rally at the Alameda Court House to demand Huey's freedom and to mourn the fallen King, noon, Monday. Until then, stay home with family, friends. The pigs will use the smallest excuse to kill you now."

Oakland was exceptional only because of the Panthers. During the days following the assassination, black ghettos exploded in more than a hundred cities across the United States, resulting in sixty deaths and thousands injured. Twenty-four thousand federal troops were sent to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Chicago, and Wilmington, Delaware, to quell uprisings. Thirty-five thousand National Guardsmen were called out to other locales.

I knew that without King, *By any means necessary* would no longer be simply a slogan. The Panthers could maintain calm in Oakland, but the Panthers were not everywhere, in every angry ghetto in the country. No white would be trusted, and women would have to rise up, not to calm the storm but to add force and transform it into a hurricane.

I stood in front of the mirror that night, my eyes swollen and my face puffy from crying. I picked up the elegant French-made scissors Louis had given me. I cut my long hair to just below my ears. The last vestiges of my glamorous mask of traditional femininity vanished and I looked like a fourteen-year-old boy.

I visited Michelle and tried to explain, taking her a box of all my beloved Mexican things. I decided to take one suitcase and a new manual Olivetti travel typewriter I bought for my exile. Louis insisted on taking his beloved stereo. We sold our cars, gave away everything else, and flew from Los Angeles to Mexico City at the end of April.

Weeks after arriving, I still had not been able to obtain a visa to travel to Cuba. I couldn't blame the Cuban government for being cautious about unknown U.S. citizens entering their country—the CIA had attempted dozens of assassinations of Fidel as well as acts of sabotage—and the Cuban vice-counsel was friendly and accommodating. I suppose

he wanted to learn more about me and my motives, although he claimed that the visa was out of his hands and would be decided in Havana. But he did invite me to visit daily to check on the visa, which I did, day after day. Louis accompanied me, and we would chat amicably with the vice-counsel. During one of those talks he placed my passport on the table between us, opened to my photo. Next to it he put the visa picture I had recently had taken at Sears. "Explain, please, why these photographs are so different and taken only one year apart?"

I stared at the two photographs of myself, one taken in May 1967, and the other in May 1968. From the 1967 passport picture, a stranger stared back at me. She could have stepped from the pages of *Vogue*. I marveled at the passport photo, trying to recall how I could have possibly convinced my fine, straight dark hair to be so naturally blonde; how my hard black eyes could appear so soft; how I had camouflaged the white spots around my eyes and mouth. The woman in the Sears photo was the new me, the real me, I thought—without makeup, splotches of white around the eyes and mouth, hair chopped short in no particular style, an unsmiling direct glare into the camera.

"I cut my hair," I said simply.

The vice-counsel shook his head. "Remarkable. Only curiosity, no problem." And he repeated what he had said every day since I had applied nearly three weeks ago: "It is difficult to approve a visa for an individual American citizen. If you could join a group . . ."

One day, he suggested that Louis and I get married so that I, too, could travel on a French passport and thereby bypass the red tape. It sounded like a good idea. In the four years of our relationship, neither of us had once suggested marriage. Each of us had been previously married for seven years, and we were certain that marriage distorted a relationship beyond recognition by creating expectations, not only between the marriage partners but also from families and friends. And there were legal consequences that neither of us desired or needed. But that piece of paper, a marriage certificate, would get me to Cuba. It appeared to be the obvious solution.

We talked to Louis's mother, to our friend Kati, and to other friends,

and everyone agreed that it was a great idea and didn't have to mean anything beyond the practicality of solving the situation. "*No significa nada*," as the Cuban vice-counsel said. It doesn't mean anything. But, of course, it did mean something. The marriage of the eldest son in a traditional French bourgeois, patriarchal, Catholic family was not only full of meaning, but also a house of mirrors that eventually shattered. The process itself was devoid of sentiment. With the blood test document and our birth certificates in hand, in a tiny, bare room in a nondescript government building, a woman judge signed our marriage document.

Unfortunately, we had failed to consult the French consulate prior to the process. When we went there with the marriage license, we were informed that my French passport would have to be issued either in the United States or France. Louis cursed and raved in French about French bureaucracy, but it didn't help. The requirement was law.

There I was in Mexico, married, and still without a visa or a French passport to go to Cuba. And Louis began asserting himself as a husband; I was now his *esposa* in everyone's eyes. I soon became convinced that Louis had tricked me into marriage, never having planned to go to Cuba and knowing that I couldn't get a French passport in Mexico. I was angry and paranoid.

When we were leaving for Mexico in April the student revolt at Columbia University was beginning to unfold, with students, both black and white, occupying campus buildings, demanding university responsibility to the surrounding community of Harlem, and closing down the campus. Once in Mexico, we received little news about Columbia and wondered what might be happening there, and then France exploded. Because of the French community in Mexico City, we received more news about the Sorbonne than about Columbia.

Spreading from student barricades at the Sorbonne in Paris to the whole of France, students seized their universities and workers their factories, all making decisions democratically, without bosses. Banks closed, public transportation systems shut down, a shortage of fuel took vehicles off the streets and highways, and garbage workers went out on strike.

There were 10 million workers on strike, virtually all of France shut down, with red and black flags replacing the Tricolor on government buildings. The workers weren't demanding higher salaries; rather, they occupied their workplaces, chanting, "factories for the workers."

The French authorities identified "Danny the Red," Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a Sorbonne student from Germany, as the ringleader and tried to portray the strike as the work of irresponsible youth. But the numbers alone defied such explanation. By the end of May, President de Gaulle and his generals fled to Germany for a meeting. After confirming the army's loyalty, de Gaulle retrenched and returned to quell the uprising, but his regime was doomed.

Louis was exhilarated and hinted at going to France instead of to Cuba. He quarreled passionately with family members and friends in the French community, none of whom supported the strike. I wanted to be there in the middle of it, or at least be out in the streets or on the university campus in Mexico City, where freedom was in the air, fueled by the Columbia and Sorbonne university revolts and the protests against the Olympic Games that were scheduled for October in Mexico City.

"SUPER-WOMAN POWER ADVOCATE SHOOTS . . ." That news headline propelled me to action.

On Tuesday, June 4, 1968, I sat in Sanborn's restaurant in Mexico City across from Bellas Artes. There the walls are lined with sepia photographs of Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa and their soldiers celebrating their revolutionary victory in that very place in 1914. Louis wanted me to meet his old friend Arturo. Arturo was a Mexican poet and anarchist intensely involved in organizing against the Olympics.

I was sullen and angry because Louis had introduced me as *mi esposa*, his wife. Screaming fights between us had become normal and I was trying to devise another way to go to Cuba. I suspected that the purpose of the meeting with Arturo was to dissuade me from going to Cuba. Arturo called Fidel Castro a "statist" who was wedded to "Soviet imperialism," and he complained that Cuba had agreed to participate in the Olympics.

Arturo was smart, intense, and angry, his personality similar to that of Louis. When he spoke, he hit the palm of his left hand with the rolled-up tabloid in his right hand. Then he opened the newspaper to illustrate his argument that the CIA controlled the Mexican secret police. The newspaper was the *News*, the English language weekly of the "American community" (meaning rich American businessmen and their families) in Mexico City. Arturo informed us that U.S. advisers on crowd control had arrived to train Mexico City police to handle demonstrators at the Olympics. My eyes caught the headline of a small article, and I grabbed the paper to read it: *Dateline, Monday, June 3, New York: Super-Woman Power Advocate Shoots Andy Warhol*. I looked more closely. I couldn't believe the words: *Super-woman power advocate* . . .

The article said that Warhol was in serious condition but was expected to live; I was relieved about that. It wasn't the possibility of Warhol dying or even Warhol being shot that thrilled me, rather, that some woman somewhere was a *super-woman power advocate* and had acted consciously as a superwoman power advocate, that a woman had publicly shot a man. "Yesterday, a woman shot a man because he was using her," I told myself.

During the hours that followed, I pieced together the story. Valerie Solanas, the shooter, was twenty-nine years old (my age) and surrendered two hours after the shooting. She was a writer and the founder of S.C.U.M.—the Society for Cutting Up Men—which apparently had no members nor sought any. She was also a street person, perhaps a prostitute, perhaps a lesbian. She claimed that Warhol had ripped off her play, *Up Your Ass*. She had been selling her radical anti-male brief, the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*, on the streets of Manhattan.

My mind raced: Could it be true that finally women were rising up? Who was this Valerie Solanas and what did her act mean? It changed everything for me, and gave a focus to my mental chaos. I realized that if I spent a year or two in Cuba the moment might evaporate, or women would rise up in huge numbers in the United States and I would miss that delicious, exciting, formative time. I wanted to be a part of it. I had to be part of it.

The next day, after winning the California primary election, Robert

Kennedy was assassinated. Winning the primary meant that he was sure to get the nomination from the Democratic Party, and there had been a celebration at the Ambassador Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. As he was leaving, he exited through the kitchen and was shot dead. Sirhan Sirhan, a Jordanian Christian immigrant, a member of the Rosicrucian sect—another lone madman, it was said—was the assassin. I thought back to only two years before when Audrey and I had formed a committee for a Robert Kennedy/William Fullbright presidential ticket. Now I felt sadness for his death, and even fear, but I no longer had illusions that his presidency would have changed anything.

I blasted out of Mexico like a rocket. I went to Boston, a city I had visited briefly the summer before. I knew very little about Boston, but I did know that the early-nineteenth-century feminist and abolitionist movements had been born and blossomed there. I decided to go to that source and unearth the past as a guide to the present.

I also knew that the largest anti-draft organization was based in Boston, as well as the sanctuary movement for men who refused to go to war, or had deserted and wanted to avoid prison. There I would seek out warrior women fed up with being the "girls who say yes to boys who say no," in the words of the charming slogan of the draft resistance movement. I planned to form—or find and join—a female liberation movement. And I would find Valerie Solanas and defend her. I had never been so sure of anything, or of myself, or as determined.

Blueberries were in season when I arrived that steamy summer. And I could eat them because they weren't from California, where the United Farm Workers were calling for a national boycott of nearly everything raised there. Even eating had become a political act. I rented a room, and I ate blueberries and read the just-released Bolivian diary of my dead hero, Ché Guevara. And I wrote and wrote, my own life story writ large as a microcosm of U.S. history and dysfunction. I loved Boston and Cambridge, and there I entered one of the happiest and most satisfying periods of my life.

Central Square in the Cambridgeport district of Cambridge was my neighborhood and anchor for the eighteen months I made Boston my temporary home, beginning in June 1968. I lived on a street named "pleasant," only two blocks from Central Square and the subway. Massachusetts Avenue was the main thoroughfare in Cambridge, connecting the great elite universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard. That was the territory of my new life and of the small women's group that came together.

Cambridgeport was a mixed working-class enclave in prosperous Cambridge. Irish, Puerto Rican, French Canadian, and African-American families lived in the drafty, wooden tenements that lined the narrow, leafy cobblestone streets that were alive with children playing. I rented a room in the third-story flat of a run-down three-story building. In the flat below lived Ellen, with her husband and two daughters. Ellen, now a housewife, formerly a prostitute, would play a key role in my developing women's liberation consciousness.

When winter came, fires ignited in the wooden houses, some burning to the ground, leaving the residents homeless. Often the fires were caused by the loss of heat due to unpaid bills that soared into the hundreds of dollars in deep winter. Freezing families would gather kindling, sometimes their own furniture, and build open fires on metal sheets for warmth and for cooking. I had not witnessed that level of poverty since childhood and it made me angry, very angry, which in turn infused my developing feminist consciousness with class consciousness. Being among the poor and powerless in that neighborhood brought back a flood of memories of what it felt like to be on the edge, to see the pain of helplessness and hopelessness in adult eyes, and to be reduced to the simple choices of survival or death.

At first, news of the Vietnam War consumed me since we had received very little information on the war while in Mexico. One evening a meeting at the church in Harvard Square featured an antiwar organizer who had just returned from Cleveland, where she had seen an army photographer's slides of a massacre during the Tet Offensive in March. A unit of

the Americal Division's 11th Light Infantry Brigade had entered the undefended village of My Lai on the Vietnamese central coast and methodically massacred hundreds of children, women, and old men.

The photographer told of torture and mutilation, rape and sodomy. He described such actions as ripping fetuses out of pregnant women, cutting off breasts, testicles, ears, gouging out eyes. He described teenage American boys on a killing spree, a visitation of the ghost of Custer at the Washita, of the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres. There was not a word about it in the mainstream news. (It would be over a year before the My Lai massacre became widely known, thanks to an investigation by journalist Seymour Hersh, published in the *New Yorker*.) Meanwhile, lame-duck president Lyndon Johnson sat cloistered in his White House, guarded by armed marines, protected from the chants outside on Pennsylvania Avenue: "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?"

News of my mother's death in Oklahoma arrived in a letter from one of my brothers. It had been sent to me in Mexico, and by the time it reached me in Cambridge, she had been dead for a month. Finally, I felt safe from my mother, and I was now freed to mourn her sad life of discrimination, poverty, violence, and alcohol. My first month in that small room, at a table in front of a window that overlooked leafy Pleasant Street, I wrote about my childhood of rural impoverishment, the violence of poverty, the confusion and terror.

The writing that summer was also a continuing rant against U.S. wealth, against capitalism and landlords, against fancy ladies and bankers, against the bombing of Vietnamese farmers and the poisoning of their fields and forests, the slaughter of their farm animals. Daily talks at the kitchen table with my neighbor, Ellen, gave me the confidence that I was not mad; angry, yes, but not mad. Poverty was madness, and anger brought me back to life.

I wrote to Louis almost daily, answering his long letters that protested my absence. I tried to transform him into the leader of a male feminist movement, but I didn't succeed.

I haven't rejected Ché in admiring Valerie Solanas. For me, Ché will always be a saint, and I learn from him, try to be like him. Yet I know he did not mean what I have made of his message. He was dedicated to *patria o muerte*, and for me it's *humanidad o muerte*. Ché, in using an old symbol and an inherently oppressive fixture, the nation-state, did not deal with patriarchy and how the state reproduces it, requires it . . .

I read that Fidel Castro is quite disappointed that women have not followed up on their liberation that the Cuban Revolution gave them. He says men are not going to liberate women. Seems to me like the same old song, but apparently he is thinking about it, and the women are resisting. Here, too. Women, even the liberationists, are not willing to give up their "femininity." I was quite nasty about it in a letter, saying she reserves the right to walk down the street in a miniskirt AND be treated as a lady. This is liberation? Well, forget the imperialist genocidal war, forget poverty, forget racism, just strut in that miniskirt and demand that men be gentleman, benevolent daddy's to their daddy's girls. The miniskirt is like a gift from heaven for the reactionary forces that be, that and long, silky hair. I know you did not approve, but I am glad I abandoned both in April. It confuses the issues. Pants and short hair ARE damned important symbols of freedom for women right now.

I think you are wrong to focus on Valerie Solanas's "insanity." Perhaps you fear the consciousness in her statements. Sure she was "crazy" to shoot Andy Warhol. The kind of oppression we experience as women does make us kind of crazy one way or another. I think compulsive shopping and plastic surgery are acts of madness . . .

Valerie's is a voice in the wilderness shouting her rebellion, saying she will accept no arguments to the contrary, allow no loopholes or fancy devices that could be used to counter her argument. She is EVERYWOMAN in some basic sense. She is my mother and other broken and destroyed women, a martyr for all women everywhere. In that way she is not so different from Ché. Read her

S.C.U.M. *Manifesto* closely. She wants to see, not a new man, but a new human being created, and now.

I answered an ad for volunteer teachers in *Resist*, the local draft-resistance newsletter. When I arrived at the cavernous warehouse headquarters of the Boston Draft Resistance Group in the Back Bay district, I found only a woman and a man. The woman introduced herself as Sue Katz. She was tense and tiny, her wild, reddish hair topped by a black beret with a red and gold Mao button. She fingered a thin red booklet that was somehow familiar.

"What is that?" I asked.

"We're an authorized chapter of the Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW, Wobblies. You know about them?" Sue said and pointed to a red and black button on the side of her beret that I hadn't noticed before.

I was stunned. The IWW. It no longer existed. My own father had told me about its death long ago.

"My grandfather was a Wobbly. He named my father after the founders, Moyer and Haywood. I didn't know it was still around," I said.

"No shit. Yeah it's still alive, hard as J. Edgar Hoover tried to destroy it," the man said. I marveled at the fact that my grandfather had the same adversary, J. Edgar Hoover, in 1918 that my generation had a half-century later.

"So the IWW's kind of symbolic now, you mean?" I asked.

"We're getting it going again. Hey, why don't you sign up to teach labor history?" Sue said.

"No, that's not my field," I said.

"Aren't you a Marxist?" The man asked.

"Yes, but I don't know labor history well enough to teach it. I would like to teach women's history from a Marxist perspective," I said.

"Look, we don't want no chicklib here, but, sure, you can post your course," Sue said, and lit a cigarette. (A year later, Sue would become a militant feminist.)

"Can I join the IWW?" I asked.

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Their faces brightened and Sue said, "Sure thing, just a dollar." I gave them a dollar and took the thin, crisp booklet—a ghost from the past. I clutched it as I walked through the Boston Commons and over the Charles River bridge to Cambridge, reading the Preamble to the IWW Constitution that was printed inside the booklet.

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes, a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

I recalled the stories my father used to tell me about my grandfather and the Wobblies. That talk had thinned in the early fifties as the Red Scare escalated and having a commie in the family tree became dangerous again. The rage about our poverty was transformed into pride for being white and "real" Americans. By 1968 my father supported George Wallace for president and claimed that communists had duped his own father. He even mailed me copies of a disgusting newspaper, *Common Sense*, which was racist and anti-Semitic, claiming that Jews controlled communism and the banking system. It seemed to me that I was the only one in the family to carry on my grandfather's convictions.

I did end up teaching a women's history course through the draft resistance office. I used the opportunity mainly to present the concept of Valerie Solanas as superwoman. It was there that I encountered a soul mate in Dana Densmore, a computer consultant who also volunteered as a draft counselor. She was married to her second husband, a quiet man who was also a scientist. I had not encountered such a healthy model for a heterosexual couple before. To me, their marriage seemed more like a partnership and friendship than marriage. Dana's mother, Donna Allen, was one of the founders of Women Strike for Peace, originally a post-

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World War II antinuclear lobby, now focused on ending the Vietnam War. Dana and her sisters had been raised to respect themselves as women by their powerful, brilliant, and independent mother.

Dana had graduated from St. Johns University in the middle of the civil rights movement, and she considered picket lines, marches, rallies, and civil disobedience part of normal life.

Dana had already heard the new term "Women's Liberation" from her mother in January. I had never heard it before, and when I did I was overwhelmed with disbelief and excitement. It was happening, women were rising up. Dana mentioned that her mother had been in New York at an organizing meeting for the Spring Mobilization Against the Vietnam War, and that another organizer, Bernardine Dohrn of Students for a Democratic Society, had uttered those two magic words. Searching further, Dana had found a Chicago newsletter, *Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement*, and began corresponding with its editor, Joreen (Jo Freeman). Dana shared my enthusiasm for the S.C.U.M. *Manifesto*, and we discussed how we might support Valerie. We brainstormed and decided to try to find like-minded women by running an ad in the local free weekly.

Meeting: 4 July 1968

ANNOUNCING:

Formation of the

FEMALE LIBERATION FRONT FOR HUMAN LIBERATION

Goals are personal-social, surely inseparable.

To question:

All phallic social structures in existence.

The historic-psychological role of females.

The ability of any human to be half a person.

To demand:

Free abortion and birth control on request.

Communal raising of children

by both sexes and by people of all ages.

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The end of man's exploitation of human, animal, and natural resources.

For females no longer or have never been able

To Breathe!

(Men are invited to contribute money, materials)

Betsy, a white welfare mother who was active locally in the National Welfare Rights Organization, was the first to answer the ad, and she brought along Stella, another white welfare mother, to the first meeting. Betsy had changed her last name to "Luthuli" when the African National Congress chief died in the spring of 1967. Soon after we met, she changed her name again, to "Warrior," in honor of Clyde Warrior, the Ponca Indian leader from Oklahoma who formed the National Indian Youth Council and died of alcohol poisoning during the summer of 1968. I persuaded my neighbor, Ellen, to attend our meetings, as well as my roommate, Maureen, who was a Harvard graduate student in biology. Marilyn, a vibrant young intellectual, also joined the group.

A poet, Gail, who was a member of the Daughters of Bilitus, soon found us. Following in the path of the Mattachine Society, which was founded by gay men in Los Angeles in 1951, lesbians had established the Daughters of Bilitus in San Francisco in 1955 to protect themselves from both general bigotry and draconian laws that forced them into closeted lives. Gail was white, but had grown up and still lived in Roxbury, Boston's predominately African-American neighborhood.

This was a powerful core group. Dana and Gail had already advanced their feminist consciousness, and Betsy and Stella had been active in the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) since it had begun a campaign in Boston the year before. Using classic civil rights direct-action civil disobedience tactics, NWRO organizers—a majority of them women—had changed the attitudes of social workers and broken through the bureaucracy that transformed welfare recipients into beggars

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and schemers. They posed welfare as a civil right rather than a gift from the government. NWRO membership nationwide was 90 percent African-American women, but in the Boston area the group was mixed due to the extraordinarily high numbers of poor white women, and the local NWRO president was white. But the analysis of welfare was the same: welfare was a necessity created by the unjust economic system, not the choice or fault of individual women.

At our first meeting, I read aloud the parts about the family in *The Second Sex*. I explained that I could trace my rejection of marriage in a straight line back to reading *The Second Sex* in the summer of 1963. I had come to believe that the family as an institution was the root of women's subjugation—women were reduced to their "natural" function and thereby dehumanized. Their sole power lay in sexuality and childbearing. Reduced to those functions they atrophied and became twisted, even became oppressors, particularly of their children. They lived through their sons, who became their fantasy lovers, and they formed daughters in their own twisted image. Dana and I also introduced the group to the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*, almost as a sacred text. We laughed hilariously at Valerïe's wicked satire, such as, "Sex is not part of a relationship; on the contrary, it is a solitary experience, non-creative, a gross waste of time," that in the midst of that era of sexual liberation was quite shocking.

I didn't want to deceive the women, and I told them about my radical views and that I'd decided that women's liberation would be necessary to a social revolution. I told them about losing custody of Michelle for going off on a trip by myself. "Men have always gone on the road or off to sea without consequences. They are heroes, from Ulysses to Kerouac. A woman who ventures forth on a quest is considered a deserter."

I argued that the freedom of women would require a social revolution and a social revolution would require liberated women. The two were inseparable. That was why none of the revolutions—not the Leninist nor the Trotskyist nor the Third World liberation movements—had triumphed and created real freedom and equality. Perhaps there was some hope in China, maybe in Vietnam and Cuba, I thought, but I also

believed that control of women was too much for men to give up voluntarily, even when they condemned authoritarianism and militarism as did Marx and Engels, Lenin, the Wobblies, Fanon, and Fidel. A special reserve of my anger was directed at Freud (formerly one of my heroes) for having labeled women "neurotic" when they resisted their "natural" roles. Then there was Marx, who wrote that the "wife and children are the slaves of the husband . . . the first property" and told his daughter that his favorite virtue in a man was strength and in women weakness, although what he hated most in a person was servility. And Ché wrote in his guerrilla warfare manual that "The woman as a cook can greatly improve the diet and, furthermore, it is easier to keep her in these domestic tasks; one of the problems in guerrilla bands is that all works of a civilian character are scorned by those who perform them."

Several of the women at the first meeting believed that our modus operandi should focus on validating women's experiences, to modify definitions, and to raise the status of housework, childbearing, and motherhood by demanding that women be paid for those services. I disagreed and insisted that those tasks should be validated for men's participation and that the whole society must be organized to participate in them. To promote traditional female roles as positive would be to validate what already existed—slavery.

I stressed the importance of individuality and my fear of "group-thinking." I believed that individuality would be the source of our energy and power. I strongly believed that only when each one of us felt autonomous and powerful could we multiply that power by joining together, but that our separate selves should never be submerged, not for any cause, ever.

We began making plans. One woman suggested that we integrate the Boston bars that did not allow women; she said, "I can drink any man under the table." I suggested we all read *The Second Sex* and discuss it for the next meeting. Marilyn told us something I was not aware of, that in de Beauvoir's new book about turning fifty, *Force of Circumstance*, she had written that the greatest achievement of her life was her relationship with

Sartre. Of course Sartre would never say that his greatest achievement in life was his relationship with her. I was disappointed.

We tried to think of a name for our group, but were reluctant to define it at that early stage. None of us wanted the emerging movement to be called *women's* liberation, however thrilled we each had been when we first heard the term. Influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, in which she advised that women were created not born, that a female was born and then forced into the social role of being a woman, we insisted the movement should be called *female* liberation. We never did convince anyone else of this, especially not the media, so only our group was called Female Liberation, as if it were an organizational name. But later the moniker, "women's liberation movement," also disappeared and was replaced by "feminism."

We came out of that first meeting with a sense that we could change the world if we worked at it. We decided to start the process with our own journal, which we published in early August 1968; I used the remaining balance of my student loan to pay the printer. Each of us contributed whatever we wanted and we put it all together without anyone editing. Each contributor typed her own material and I did the layout and chose the graphics. The journal had no name, no table of contents, no page numbers, no date or price. The cover featured a drawing by one of Dana's sisters of a nude woman entrapped by her own hair.

The first journal remains a remarkable document—as fresh and angry and radical and timely in the twenty-first century as it was in 1968. Through poetry, fiction, testimony, theoretical essays, quotes, and art, every idea and issue that would emerge in the women's liberation movement—and later in postmodern feminist thought—was identified, sexual roles were deconstructed, and a vision of the future without mandated gender roles was visualized. The articles raised a range of questions analyzing and condemning rape, wife-beating, sexual harassment, marriage, prostitution, pornography, advertising, the media, double standards, female genital mutilation, male domination of the radical movement, patriarchy, racism, capitalism, colonialism, and war. Taken together, they called for a total

replacement of the existing system with one that would prioritize the needs of everyone in society, beginning with the needs of the most powerless: namely children, the ill and disabled, and the elderly.

Ellen's haunting poems filled the center ten pages of the eighty-page, saddle-stitched booklet. Her essay—under a pseudonym—on prostitution began with the observation that the old truism that "as long as there are men there will be prostitutes" implied that women were not inherently anxious to give away their bodies: "The statement does not say 'As long as there are women there will be prostitutes.'"

Dana's theoretical essays included one entitled "On Celibacy." Apparently it was far more shocking to men and women than the most extreme pornography, as it promoted the right to abstain from sexual relations. That essay mythologized our group as having taken "vows of celibacy." In it, Dana argued that sexual liberation had nothing to do with women's liberation; on the contrary, it was a male strategy to maintain supremacy and to control women. "This is a call not for celibacy but for an acceptance of celibacy as an honorable alternative, one preferable to the degradation of most male-female sexual relationships." I titled my essay on the same topic "Asexuality," and posited that "Considering what one must go through to attain a relationship of whole to whole in this society, or any other I know of, the most 'normal' person, the most moral, is the celibate."

Gail's riveting poems appeared throughout the journal. Maureen wrote a piece calling on female radicals to form an autonomous women's liberation movement, and Stella, in her first attempt ever to write, contributed a heart-rending essay about female powerlessness. In an effort to address the lack of African-American women in our early group, I obtained permission to publish Cordelia Nikkalaos's column from a recent issue of a civil rights publication, the *Mississippi News Letter*; it began, "Watch it, you guys!" and makes the point to her brother civil rights militants that "no kind of inequality works." I used six of Louis's collages in the journal. One of his pieces resulted in the metaphor for the dawning of feminist consciousness, "the click." That collage featured a

news clipping of the back of a man's head in which he had inserted a light switch set on "off." The caption read, "click."

The journal ended with a full page of spoofs on slogans to which we all contributed, the result of brainstorming sessions where we'd tried to come up with a name for our journal. In the end, we decided to use no name at all. By the time we published the second issue in early 1969, we had decided on a name: *NO MORE FUN AND GAMES: A Journal of Female Liberation*.

I was excited about the journal, but also itching for action. I didn't have to wait long for an opportunity. One night near midnight I heard noises at the door and found Ellen crumpled in the hallway. She was bruised and battered, her clothes torn and muddy. She begged me to not tell her husband, who was downstairs with the children. I assumed he had beaten her up—I already had suspicions that he did so when he came home drunk.

Ellen had two preschool daughters, and confided to us that she had supported them by working as a "call girl" until she married her present husband. She was a fragile, quiet-spoken blonde woman who could dress up and transform herself into a sexy bombshell—a "female impersonator," as we called the result.

I tried to calm Ellen, ran a hot bubble bath and coaxed her into it, massaged her neck and shoulders. She blurted out that she had been raped.

"We have to report it," was my automatic reaction.

"No cops, no way. To them women exist only to be fucked," she shrieked and began sobbing again. "Anyway, the cops around here know I used to hustle. And I've just washed away the evidence." But I convinced her to file a report.

"I will do it for all women, to raise consciousness," Ellen agreed.

The two policemen on duty treated Ellen as a suspect rather than the victim. Tests were made, reports filed. We stayed cool and spent hours filling out forms. Ellen filed for legal aid and was assigned a pro bono lawyer.

"I have to tell you something. I know the man who raped me. I know his name," Ellen informed me at the end of the exhausting week. She said

he was a john from the old days, an English professor who had claimed to admire the poetry he'd seen in our journal and said he could get her into the Harvard poetry workshop. He had asked her out for dinner to discuss it. Then, with a knife to her throat, he raped her on the banks of the Charles River.

"Now that I've told you the truth, you won't want to support me," she said.

"It would be easier if he were a stranger, but at least we have a case now that we have a name. You'll have to give the police and the lawyer his name."

The lawyer was an idealistic young man involved with Planned Parenthood, interested in establishing a test case based on the principle of the integrity of a woman's body, whether raped by a husband or a date or even a prostitute raped against her will. Society had never considered rape as something that could happen to prostitutes at the hands of their customers or to wives as victims of their husbands.

The trial day arrived. The courtroom was packed with scandal seekers. The professor-defendant had hired a well-known criminal lawyer and lined up an array of character witnesses. I was Ellen's only witness. Thankfully, the jury was half women.

Our strategy was for me to appear as an expert witness to present a female liberation perspective about rape. Ellen's lawyer put me on the stand and questioned me for an hour. I traced the history of patriarchy and woman as property.

We won, and it was a sweet victory even though the penalty was light—six months in jail, suspended, and a \$200 fine. But Ellen was satisfied. During the following week Ellen's bruised face told the story of her punishment at home.

After the trial I took the court transcript and rewrote what I had said into my first manifesto on female liberation. I entitled the essay "Caste and Class: Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution," a ten-page tract that ended:

The value of a woman for a man is much greater than the value of a machine or hired person to satisfy his sexual urges and fantasies, do his housework, breed and tend his offspring. It is convenient for a man to have these satisfactions from "his woman," but his relation to her as a person, his position of being of a higher caste, is the central aspect of his power and dominance over her and why men and the society they control will do anything to maintain that dominance—it is POWER.

Even the journal provided opportunities for action. We emulated Valerie Solanas by hawking it on the streets. Betsy was particularly adept and fearless at that task, and she was the only one of us who would go out by herself, often taking her nine-year-old daughter, Dawn, who had become a member of our group. Most of the time we worked Harvard Square, but all along Massachusetts Avenue we would approach women, men, and couples, assertively if not aggressively, engaging many in heated dialog. Women sometimes fled in horror and many men heckled us, but nothing deterred us.

We favored the non-elitist method of organizing and recruiting. We sold the journal for \$1 a copy and gave away more than we sold. I then came up with a solution to repay myself for the printing cost. After seeing a feature-length documentary about a female impersonator beauty contest, I persuaded the theater manager to allow our group to hold a benefit showing. We set a date, designed and copied fliers, and hit the streets with them.

"The Queen"

Monday—September 30—ONLY

Benefit showing for FEMALE LIBERATION Kenmore Sq Theater

The Drag Queen is Everywoman.

To please "The Man" wear a mask.

A Queen chooses the slavery of a female.

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We are born slaves.

We are whores—A hot water bottle for your bed.

We are pimps—Filling your ego with hot air.

We are dolls—to be dressed in pretties for each new occasion.

THE QUEEN IS EVERYWOMAN

\$2.00 for women and homosexuals, \$3.00 for others

Both shows sold out and we made enough money to repay me and to print the second issue. We were overjoyed by our success. We were getting the hang of collective work and organizing, and learning to love it.

When one of us read that a new Playboy Club was going to have its grand opening in Boston, we prepared a flyer denouncing the consumerism inherent in the *Playboy* creed, with women as one of the commodities. The gentlemen patrons who arrived in their Jaguars and Porsches were transformed into rednecked bullies upon encountering us, six angry women handing out leaflets. They spit out threats and grabbed our leaflets to crush in their fists or to stomp with their Italian patent-leather footwear. The local entertainment-media representatives—all white males—from both TV stations and newspapers were present to cover the festivities and they found our presence newsworthy, but we received a very hostile and distorted portrayal.

Our sometimes dangerous experiences on the streets and the highly publicized violence against women—the famed Boston Strangler had done his work three years earlier—brought us to the conclusion that we women needed to learn to protect ourselves. We signed up for a self-defense class at the YWCA, a sort of watered-down judo taught by an off-duty cop that was meant to make us more cautious rather than braver. Still, aping the Panthers, Young Lords, Brown Berets, and the American Indian Movement, we began patrolling the streets after dark near factories, hospitals, the telephone company, and other establishments where a great number of women were getting off work, to escort them to the bus or subway stops.

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One night, several of us went to see the Shirley Clarke documentary, *Portrait of Jason*, a monologue by an alcoholic and suicidal African-American gay prostitute. Jason's deeply perceptive, often hilarious observations struck a chord in us and we laughed and sobbed at the same time. Sitting in front of us was a young, black woman who was laughing with such joy and pain that it seemed that she was a part of our small clique. After the film we introduced ourselves and told her we provided escorts for women. We asked her if she would like us to walk her home, as it was near midnight. Mary Ann Weathers, who joined our group, marveled over the bizarre and wonderful experience of having five white women volunteer to protect her.

I felt the need to find out more about other women's liberation groups, and I wanted to meet Valerie Solanas, so in early August I took the train to New York. I had been able to contact some National Organization for Women (NOW) officials, one of whom managed to get my name on a visitors' list at the Women's House of Detention where Valerie was being held until her hearing.

NOW was a five-year-old advocacy organization, founded by Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique*. The current president of the New York chapter was tall, beautiful, and gracious Ti-Grace Atkinson, a writer from an oil-rich Louisiana family, who had a doctorate in philosophy. Florynce Kennedy, a veteran African-American civil rights attorney and activist and a member of NOW's board of directors, was trying to free Valerie, or at least save her from years in prison.

It took several days for Flo to arrange the meeting with Valerie, so Ti-Grace took me to women's meetings in New York and introduced me to dozens of women's liberation activists: some reformists, some radicals, some extremists. One was a young lesbian biologist who avidly supported Valerie, whom she took quite literally. She was researching viruses, hoping to identify a fatal one that would attack males only. She said that once males were eradicated, she planned to introduce chemical reproduction without sperm. Furthermore, women would no longer carry the fetus; rather, the process would take place in the laboratory. She chatted about this idea as if

she were discussing the weather. Now I understood what Stokely Carmichael had meant when he said that young black militants in Chicago had called him "Uncle Tom." When I challenged the young woman, she called me a "daddy's girl," Valerie's term for male-identified women.

Ti-Grace invited me to stay at her place. Her midtown studio on the East Side was near Flo's apartment, and I spent many hours talking with both of them about Valerie's case and about the emerging radical women's movement. Ti-Grace was becoming involved with the more radical activists, and she was in hot water with the more conservative Friedan people in NOW because of her open support for Valerie and for her condemnation of marriage. A few months later she would be kicked out of her position in NOW and would start a new organization she called The Feminists.

One day we were glued to Flo's TV watching the police riot in Chicago at the Democratic Convention. Antiwar protesters clogged the parks and streets of Chicago and were beaten brutally by Mayor Richard Daley's police. Many were arrested, including seven white male antiwar leaders along with Black Panther Party chairman, Bobby Seale, who all faced vague felony conspiracy charges, not based on their actions or even coordination, rather a kind of random choice of well-known activists.

The event lay outside my orbit, however, and seemed removed from the world of the women's liberation movement. Not for a minute did it cross my mind that what was happening in Chicago might be more important than women's liberation or helping Valerie. I didn't deny that the Chicago phenomenon was important, but in my view it contained the seeds of the movement's destruction because it reinforced male supremacy rather than questioning it; during the following eighteen months, the entire movement was expected to concentrate on the acquittal of seven white male leaders.

When I finally visited Valerie, I was allowed to talk with her on a telephone and to see her through a scratched and filthy window. I don't think she knew who I was or what I was doing there in the five minutes we shared. All I could see clearly were her piercing black eyes that mirrored

my own. I had the odd feeling I was looking at myself; the experience was sobering. I saw madness in Valerie's eyes. I saw my mother's eyes.

Later that month, Dana and I visited Valerie at the New York State Institution for the Criminally Insane at Matteawan. After a long ordeal of searches and fingerprinting, we were able to spend three intense hours with Valerie. I wrote Louis a glowing report:

What a mind Valerie has. I can guarantee she is not a violent person, nor is she anti-male. She is angry and she is anti-Man. I wish I could capture what I felt about Valerie in her presence. It is difficult to describe what she is like. Her presence is overwhelming, heavy. I felt I was face to face with myself as I had felt the first time I met her. A part of it is that her explosion (shooting Warhol) came just at that moment when my own explosion happened (in Mexico with you). I feel almost as if she is there in prison in my stead, and I am deeply grateful to her. (You should be, too!)

I think of her more as Rimbaud than Ché, and I don't think she will herself ever be a revolutionary in the left political sense. Perhaps destroyers like her can never transform their energy, but only inspire others. I do not know. But she will die or live in the nuthouse forever before she will waver an inch from her internal freedom. She is a free being. That is the most overwhelming sense I had in her presence, that she was a free human being. I do not believe I have ever been in such a presence before.

Matteawan is for those who are "hopelessly and criminally insane." Isn't that something? Neither Ché nor Huey nor Fidel nor Mao nor Stokely ever had to face that fate—jail, prison, penitentiary, torture, even death, but never a mental institution. Why must you be crazy if you are a woman who tries to kill a man? It is only surprising that it doesn't happen more often.

Despite my words to Louis, I realized that Valerie's violent act had marked her and that she probably wouldn't be able to become a whole

person, much less a leader in the women's liberation movement as I had hoped. Yet I felt a responsibility and commitment to defend and support her and to give voice and credence to the concerns that drove her mad. And if we were lucky, she might even recover and direct her energy and anger to the new movement. Flo Kennedy eventually arranged for her release, but I never heard from Valerie again. (She was found dead in a San Francisco welfare hotel more than a decade later.)

In early August 1968, at the height of our focus on supporting Valerie, Dana and I arrived uninvited in Sandy Springs, Maryland, for an invitation-only women's liberation meeting. The purpose of the gathering was to plan a national women's liberation conference. It was Dana's mother, Donna Allen, who had received the invitation, but she sent us in her place. The meeting site was on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., and Dana and I stayed overnight with Donna, who was unlike any woman I had ever met. She was a true intellectual and revolutionary, as I imagined Simone de Beauvoir.

The women who attended the meeting were militants with battle scars and medals from the front lines facing police dogs and jail in Mississippi and organizing antiwar demonstrations for the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Some were red-diaper babies, and all of them were true leaders, but with lesser status than their male counterparts. What I didn't realize at the time was that those women were exhausted and weary of supporting "other people's causes," as they put it.

The women were all in their mid- to late twenties, like Dana and me. Most were neither married nor had children. Their main concern appeared to be how to circumvent accusations of man hating and lesbianism. Marilyn Webb from the Washington, D.C., SDS chapter, who had organized the meeting, had expressed these fears in the June issue of SDS's *New Left Notes*, titled "Women: We Have a Common Enemy," wherein she called on radical women to unite with radical men for women's liberation:

We have developed our own kind of femininity and enjoy being women who love men and do not see them as the enemy. We are

not the cold, grey-suited women of the Twenties, nor the "masculinized" ones of the present. Staid suits have been replaced by the colorful dress of a turned-on generation of women who are asserting themselves as females as well as intellectuals.

My response to their discussions about their fear of displeasing men and losing their sexual seductiveness was to quote passages from the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*, such as:

Sex is not part of a relationship; on the contrary, it is a solitary experience, non-creative, a gross waste of time. The female can easily—far more easily than she may think—condition away her sex drive, leaving her completely cool and cerebral and free to pursue truly worthy relationships and activities; but the male, who seems to dig women sexually and who seeks constantly to arouse them, stimulates the highly-sexed female to frenzies of lust, throwing her into a sex bag from which few women ever escape. Sex is the refuge of the mindless. And the more mindless the woman, the more deeply embedded in the male "culture," in short, the nicer she is, the more sexual she is. The nicest women in our "society" are raving sex maniacs. But, being just awfully, awfully nice they don't, of course, descend to fucking—that's uncouth—rather they make love, commune by means of their bodies and establish sensual rapport.

That hit a nerve, all right. The participants did not appreciate Valerie's humor or her use of words as a tactic to raise consciousness.

On the other hand, I thought those women expressed more contempt and lack of hope for men than I could have ever imagined myself. When I suggested that women force men to raise children and insist that they work in the community day care centers we envisaged, thus allowing men to become civilized and sensitized by seeing life grow, they nearly all agreed that men would desert or harm the children, even let them starve. I had never considered that. For all my resentment toward my ex-

husband, I knew he did not behave that way with Michelle. If they believed men were so inherently evil, why did they have them in their lives at all?

I told them that they were self-righteous to think that women were morally and biologically superior to men and to refuse to accept that men could be caretakers, too. Being responsible for children would make men change, I argued. But, it seemed, they were not yet willing to relinquish their control over someone weaker than themselves—their children—and they were unwilling to admit that men were human, too. Dana pointed out that women could not be solely responsible for the survival of the human race while men made war and controlled everything. I insisted that both women and men must be liberated so we could strike at the real enemy—the state, the power elite that kept us all oppressed.

In response to the strong "pro-woman line"—that we should never criticize another woman—promoted by two of the women, I read aloud Valerie's view from the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*:

The conflict, therefore, is not between females and males, but between SCUM—dominant, secure, self-confident, nasty, violent, selfish, independent, proud, thrill-seeking, free-wheeling arrogant females... and nice, passive, accepting, "cultivated," polite, dignified, subdued, dependent, scared, mindless, insecure, approval-seeking Daddy's Girls... who have reduced their mind, thoughts and sights to the male level, who, lacking sense, imagination and wit can have value only in a male "society," who can have a place in the sun, or, rather, in the slime, only as soothers, ego boosters, relaxers, and breeders.

By the end of the meeting, the women were a little more accepting of Dana and me.

They were an impressive gathering, but I disagreed with their conception of a women's liberation movement. They wanted to organize a

mass movement of women against war and racism and for socialism on the basis of their being mothers of boys who die in war and sisters across racial boundaries and poverty. I thought this was simply an extension of the long existing women's peace movements, from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom of the 1920s to the current International Strike for Peace. On the other hand, they also wanted to organize private consciousness-raising groups of like-thinking movement women, to share their complaints about their oppressive personal situations and let off a little steam. Except for "pro-woman" women, they were certainly not talking about a women-centered movement for the liberation of women. Not yet.

Race rightly was a central issue. These strongly antiracist activists were troubled that they were all white and all from middle-class backgrounds. But I was dismayed when they expressed the view that black women would reject women's liberation and accuse white radical women of racism and selfishness for talking about "our own personal problems." They felt they shouldn't even go public until they had obtained the "approval" of leading black women. In the end, they agreed to organize a national conference at Thanksgiving in Chicago, and to try to persuade Kathleen Cleaver and other Black Panther women to participate. I objected to Kathleen Cleaver, insisting that she was not liberated herself, and that shocked them.

It seemed to me that these women were patronizing black women, and I wondered if, at their age, they would ever escape being Valerié's "Daddy's girls." Yet the conference was an important experience for me.

I left confident that most of the women who were there would become active in a real women's liberation movement if we could get it going. I thought of Frantz Fanon's observation that the oppressed were inherently radical, that it was a matter of removing masks to uncover that radicalism. I believed that radical feminism lay behind the masks of those women at the conference.

Then came the media attention to the budding women's liberation movement. In early September, a television station arranged for me to fly

to New York to participate in a discussion with Betty Friedan and novelist Rona Jaffe. I was reluctant to engage in a public conflict with two NOW feminists with whom I was certain to disagree, but Ti-Grace had given the television producer my name and encouraged me to go on the show and try to be as unifying as possible while raising radical feminist ideas to women in the viewing audience who otherwise might not be exposed to them.

Betty Friedan, however, had no desire for unity with a radical feminist. She began her verbal assault in the dressing room when I refused to have makeup applied, and did not stop until the show was over. She attacked me as a representative of young, militant feminists, objecting to the use of the term "women's liberation." I agreed with her and said that our group in Boston preferred "female liberation," explaining that we were dealing not only with the equality of women in society but the liberation of the female principle in order to change the very structure of society. That made her even angrier and she began to attack my appearance. I had worn my best army surplus white cotton sailor trousers and a white man's shirt. She said that scruffy feminists like me were giving the movement a bad name.

I told Betty Friedan that I thought she feared losing her celebrity leadership position to women who were committed to collective action with no leaders, and that she wanted no more than to put women into political office. She called me an anarchist, and I agreed with the characterization and read a favorite quote from the most notorious of all anarchists, Emma Goldman in 1913:

There is no reason whatever to assume that woman, in her climb to emancipation, has been, or will be, helped by the ballot. Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc. by making her life

simpler, but deeper and richer. Only that, and not the ballot, will set woman free.

Betty Friedan huffed out of the studio, and I would have little occasion to cross paths with her after that.

A few weeks later while in New York to do another TV show, I attended women's liberation meetings and spent hours talking to individual women, staying in their homes. I found that a kind of myth had developed about "the Boston women," meaning our still-unnamed group. They were impressed that we had created and published an eighty-page journal in two weeks. I heard outrageous stories: for instance, that we had organized prostitutes into secret revolutionary cells. I tried to explain that, in fact, we did not yet even regard ourselves as a "group," and certainly not an organization. The myths about us, while amusing, were also disturbing, particularly the perception of me as a cult-like figure.

At that time, I was still innocent of the anti-leaderism that prevailed in the women's liberation movement, a practice developed in the civil rights and student movements that relied on consensus decision making and eschewed structures of authority. As I became familiar with this practice, it was plain to see that consensus formed around the projects and personalities of certain individuals, and I figured out that it was politics, for which I had little stomach.

My intense activities with our group—the publication of the second journal, networking with other women's groups, and teaching courses at local universities—were severely disrupted by events in Mexico City and the arrival of Louis in late October. During August and September, Louis's letters and weekly phone calls had reported on the Cultural Revolution that was sweeping Mexico City. The streets were full of giant papier-mâché puppets, music, dancing, theater, festive marches of hundreds of thousands of students—university, technical, high school, public and private—including his brothers and sister, and Nora, Kati's daughter, who

served as a medic to the peaceful multitudes. They were calling for freedom, for democracy, and in the meantime simply assuming it. And they were opposing the Mexican government's playing host to the Olympics.

The government was pouring billions of pesos into preparation for the Olympics in October, including the accelerated construction of a new subway system to carry the crowds. The students demanded that funds be directed to the poor for housing, health care, and education, and threatened to disrupt the Olympics to gain worldwide publicity that would explode the myth of "the Mexican miracle."

In the past, ever since the waning of the Mexican Revolution and the installation of the ruling party (PRI) in the 1920s, continuous uprising had been the enterprise of landless or impoverished campesinos, mostly Indians, in remote regions of the republic. They were usually brutally crushed with no publicity in the cities. The great pride of the PRI was its creation of an urban middle class that provided a buffer between them, the ruling class, and the majority, the impoverished mob. The creation of "middle sectors" who would owe their privileged lifestyle and survival to the ruling class, which in turn owed its own survival to the backing of the United States, was the centerpiece of late U.S. imperialism in Latin America, and nowhere had it triumphed as dramatically as in Mexico.

But this time, in the summer of 1968, it was the children of those privileged parasites who were filling the streets with their calls for democracy, economic justice, and the end of police brutality. The uprising was unimaginable, just as it had been in France in May.

The Mexican government's response—violent repression as advised by the CIA—also set the pattern for other countries in dealing with the rebellion of the privileged children. On October 2, 1968, ten days before the opening of the Olympic Games, a half million people, mostly students, marched through the wide boulevards of Mexico City and gathered for a rally at the Plaza of Three Cultures in Tlatelolco Square. After a deafening noise of machine-gun fire, the billows of black smoke, and the blood-curdling screams had settled into a deadly silence, the body count was 600 wounded, 49 dead, 1,500 incarcerated and tortured, with

many more to be rounded up in the months ahead. Hundreds fled into hiding or exile and were presumed dead by their loved ones. Many hid out in remote areas of Mexico, where they would join peasant guerrillas.

Louis was so distraught when he called me about the massacre that he could hardly speak. His brothers and sister were safe, as was Nora, but dozens of their friends had disappeared. Louis's father, as a medical doctor, was permitted to enter the city morgues and hospitals to search for the lost children of his lifelong friends. He counted many more dead than the official forty-nine and said there were hundreds killed.

Some of Louis's friends who were leaders in the movement had also disappeared, including Arturo. Our Jamaican friend, Albert, who was studying art in Mexico City, was terrified because he was a foreigner and had been present at the rally, certain that the police had photographed him and that he would stand out because he was black. Everyone, it seemed, believed that they had seen gringos calling the shots on the rooftops around the square.

Soon after the massacre, Louis and Albert arrived. Louis was headed to France and Albert to Jamaica. They were like shell-shocked war survivors. The massacre had forced the movement underground, and now the federal police were raiding middle-class homes in the night, dragging suspects out of their beds. Louis's family members had packed their bags to flee on a moment's notice to his mother's hometown, a rural Indian village in the mountains. Albert had experienced a raid on the student dormitory where he lived. He said that it was clear that the police had no interest in foreigners, only Mexicans, and a number of his friends were hauled away in the middle of the night. From militants who had gone underground came sniper fire in the night and the gun battles between them and the police would continue for several months throughout the city.

Louis, normally agitated, was a nervous wreck. Sleepless nights, sporadic eating, and chain-smoking had taken their toll. I felt I was being asked to nurse a casualty of trauma and I had no knowledge of how to handle it, nor could I distinguish between his current state and our usual combative relationship. It was not a happy time. The only immediate un-

dication was the unexpected protest by two U.S. Olympic medal winners. During the awards ceremony, with 85,000 spectators watching and television carrying the event around the world, John Carlos and Tommie Smith, both African-American runners, donned black gloves, raised their fists in the Black Power salute, and hung their heads in shame as the band played the U.S. national anthem.

Albert's girlfriend, Hannah, had recently moved to Cambridge, only a few blocks from me. Hannah and Albert had been fellow art students at Yale. After graduation, he won a scholarship to study mural art in Mexico and Hannah had moved to Cambridge for a job at Harvard's Fogg Art Museum. Albert and Hannah had a volatile, on-and-off relationship of the same duration as Louis's and mine. Although Albert stayed with Hannah and Louis with me, we spent the days and evenings together at my place, discussing revolution. Albert and Louis seemed torn between climbing into a hole to hide and joining a guerrilla army somewhere.

A few days after Louis arrived, members of our women's group gathered at my flat for our weekly meeting. I had told Louis about the meeting and suggested that he might want to go to a movie or visit Albert, but he said he didn't want to go out and wanted to meet the women I worked with. I introduced him to each of the women as they arrived and he chatted with them in the kitchen around the coffee pot. Once we were seated in a circle, Louis sat down as well and showed no signs of leaving, as I had assumed he would. The strong emotions that surged through me included surprise, dismay, fury, pity, embarrassment, and hate. The other women showed their discomfort by shifting in their chairs and trading curious glances. Dana finally broke the silent tension by announcing that the meeting was beginning and asked Louis to leave. He did so, but I could hear him in my room slamming things around in anger.

Louis was completely distracted during the meeting, realizing that I was afraid of Louis, still afraid of his disapproval. But I also felt annoyed at the women for not allowing him to stay. The issue of men in our meetings had never been discussed, and no man had ever attempted to join our group.

But there was no denying that Louis was often behaving badly, and had

been for a long time; that he was bullying me and that the permanence of our relationship depended on my changing to suit him. I counted the days until he would leave for France.

Not surprisingly, Maureen, my roommate, decided to move into a Harvard residence. I couldn't blame her. The flat had been full of people and activity during all hours the whole time we had lived there, and her studies were suffering. And then came the constant presence and dark mood of Louis. Hannah and I agreed that she would move in with me.

Albert and Louis occupied themselves transporting Hannah's many belongings. Hannah was a junk collector, having amassed from junk shops and garbage cans Persian carpets and antique tables and chairs, beautiful tapestries, Tibetan mandalas, a rattan couch and chair, an antique bed frame, and candles in glass vases abandoned by Catholic churches. And she had accumulated more than 100 wooden Chinese grocer's crates, which she stacked to the ceiling all around the walls as bookcases—she owned hundreds of books, mostly rare books she'd found in used book stores.

Hannah had a record player and she collected esoteric music from Asia, the Caribbean, and Turkey. I had not listened to music much since I left my records and player in Berkeley. I liked Hannah's music, especially a record Albert had given her by Blind Lemon, a Caribbean street musician. I wondered why I had lived without music for so long, for I regarded music as a predictor and reflection of revolutionary possibilities. I relied on Bob Dylan as a seer who literally channeled the mood of the revolution. His *John Wesley Harding* album, named for a famous outlaw, had thrilled me the year before, especially "All Along the Watchtower," which seemed to me a coda for revolution. Some of the women in our group and many in the new women's movement had turned against Dylan and other artists for their misogyny, and I couldn't deny its presence in many lyrics. Hannah seemed relieved that I enjoyed music, art, and films, as she had an image of the new women's movement as being against culture in general.

Once Hannah and I were settled, it was time for Louis to leave for

France and Albert for Jamaica. We agreed that at Christmas I would join Louis in France and perhaps stay, or he would return with me. But our problems were not resolved. I had no idea if this plan would actually happen. I only knew I was relieved to see him go.

I threw myself into work on the journal and trying to repair my relationship with the group. Although Dana and I had shown up uninvited to the Sandy Springs meeting in August, and our presence and ideas had initially been unwelcome, we had ultimately been included in the planning at the end of the conference for the first national women's liberation gathering, which would be held outside Chicago at Thanksgiving. I had thought that I would attend, but after a tense group discussion, I bowed out. We feared that with my TV appearances in New York and my high profile at the Sandy Springs conference, our group might end up being associated too much with Roxanne Dunbar alone, which would defeat our attempt to become a powerful group of equal individuals. I also felt personally that putting me into the spotlight was a mistake I didn't want to repeat. So we decided that Dana would go alone to distribute our journal and report back to us.

Of course, I immediately regretted missing that historic conference attended by 200 women from thirty cities in the United States and Canada. I had to hear about it secondhand. Anne Koedt, author of "Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," which our group had discussed and distributed, had impressed Dana. Anne and Ti-Grace Atkinson had organized a workshop to discuss the paper, and the discussion went on into the night. Dana had proposed that celibacy be a choice for women; that proposal was far more controversial than suggestions of sado-masochism, group sex, or homosexuality. "The myth of sexual liberation has so brainwashed them that they cannot distinguish between celibacy and frigidity," Dana said.

Dana also told us about Shulamith Firestone's argument that pregnancy was destructive and oppressive and that women should choose not to bear children. In another workshop on alternative lifestyles, all had agreed that standard marriage arrangements should be abandoned, although most felt that married women themselves should not be con-

denmed. Dana reported that all the workshops were riveting, but that the plenary sessions were chaotic with polarized arguments between New Left women, some of whom wanted to reject the Left entirely and opt for a woman-centered movement, and others who argued that women should concentrate on the antiwar and anticapitalist struggle while challenging male dominance. The women's liberationists rejected the Left while the New Left women regarded consciousness-raising and a women-centered movement as bourgeois and counterrevolutionary.

I was most interested in what I heard about Marlene Dixon's views. She was a radical professor at the University of Chicago who had been refused tenure and was fighting the decision. It seemed to me that her views corresponded with my own, that the radical feminist/New Left split was a false dichotomy and that a third alternative was necessary. Marlene Dixon argued that a women-centered, anti-imperialist movement with the goal of socialism was not only necessary, but also possible.

After Dana returned from the conference, we discussed the possibility of merging with one of the larger groups in order to support a national organization. But instead we decided to remain autonomous and to develop our own theory and base of operations. We surmised that if we were on to something, the movement would follow. Meanwhile, the journal would be our identity and voice, and we turned our attention to producing the second issue.

As the only artist in our group, Hannah took on the design work. We liked the new name, *NO MORE FUN AND GAMES: A Journal of Female Liberation*. Our main problem was that we needed money to produce the journal and to organize. Help soon came in the form of a new member, Abby Rockefeller.

Helen Kritzer, one of the organizers of the Thanksgiving Chicago conference, had come to Boston in early November to fund-raise, and she asked for my help. We had met in London the year before when she was there with Pallo Jordan, one of the young African National Congress members. Back then I had regarded her as Pallo's uncritical girlfriend, but now she told me that she, too, had been angered by male chauvinism in

the ANC. Helen said that she had an appointment with Abby Rockefeller, who lived in Cambridge, and she wanted me to go along.

"One of the Rockefeller's?" I asked. The name "Rockefeller," a word that simply meant wealth, was almost mythical.

"None other, daughter of David, the chairman of Chase-Manhattan Bank and niece of New York governor Nelson Rockefeller," Helen said. I imagined a wealthy socialite.

"I don't think I'd be the right person," I said and gestured to my oversized army surplus trousers and combat boots. Helen assured me that Abby was already active in the civil rights and antiwar movements and that she donated most of her trust income to organizing projects, especially the Boston draft resistance.

"As a matter of fact, I think she will respond to you better than to me because I hear she's very smart and only gives money to projects she understands. You can explain women's liberation better than I can," Helen said.

I agreed, and we met Abby in her home near Harvard Square at the appointed time. Abby and I talked for three hours, and the conversation gave voice and concreteness to her own anger. She wrote a check for the Chicago conference and joined our women's group.

Soon the journal was no longer our only vehicle for communicating female liberation. Abby bought us a mimeograph machine and a typewriter so we could create and print timely commentaries for local distribution. The New England Free Press, one of the major radical printing houses, agreed to print and distribute some of our essays through their network, the first being my "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution."

Abby offered the basement of her house for office space. We bought large doors from the lumberyard to make tables for layout and collating. We partitioned work areas—one for typing, one for printing, one for files and a library. Abby had a telephone installed.

Each day various members of the group emerged from the underground workshop and hit the streets, selling the journal and handing out

thousands of informational flyers we produced on our new mimeo. Our group quickly became high profile and controversial, not just with the antiwar organizations led mainly by men, but among other radical women in the Boston area who were organizing women's projects clustered in "consciousness-raising" groups. Our group was contemptuous of what we considered their touchy-feely self-indulgence, and we pushed for more radical women's liberation positions. I wrote Louis: "The other radical women here really snub me. I do not understand those sure, steel-plated organizers. They are the next generation's politicians, I guess."

We needed a name. As Dana pointed out, "Our group is more than just the journal, and everyone's calling us whatever they want, like 'the Boston women' or 'female liberation.' If we don't name ourselves, others will do it for us."

"What's wrong with calling ourselves female liberation?" I asked.

"But that's the name we're promoting for the whole women's movement, not just our group. The movement is the organism and we're a cell of it," Dana said.

"I almost feel like a member of a cell hidden out in this windowless basement," said Jeanne, new to the group, who considered herself a hardcore anarchist.

"A cell. Let's call our group a cell, something that divides and grows rather than splitting and dying, something that is part of a larger whole," Dana said, sounding like the scientist she was.

"Our address is 16 Lexington. Why not call ourselves Cell 16?" I said.

"Cell 16. I like that. And when we're asked about the other fifteen we can make people guess," Abby said.

Cell 16 was considered by other women's groups to be heavy on "theory," but like the Redstockings, NOW, and Radical Women in New York, we were action-driven. We had confronted the issue of rape by defending Ellen, the issue of pornography by picketing the Playboy Club; we had denounced the women's fashion industry and advertising-ordained images by publicizing *The Queen* and by the way we presented ourselves in public. Next, we took on street violence against women.

Abby and her roommate, Jayne, had been studying Tae Kwan Do for a few months. On a cold November night after a late meeting in Boston, Abby, Dana and I, and a few other women were walking to Abby's car when suddenly a car full of men pulled up close to the curb and moved along with us, taunting us and yelling obscenities. I ran toward the car and jammed my fist through the open window, aiming for the driver's giddy grin. He easily evaded my punch. I stood my ground, fists on my hips, and cursed them.

"Who the hell do you think you are, talking to us uninvited?"

Blinded by years of accumulated fury at men for intruding upon my privacy in the streets, I really forgot momentarily that the other women were with me, and I had no fear. Then the driver stopped, opened his door, and in one seemingly well-practiced movement, he reached down behind his seat and brought up a tire iron. He stood on the curb facing me, inches from me. He was tall and muscled, poised with his muscular arm bracing the weapon above his head like the Arm and Hammer logo.

I refused to budge. I saw his eyes move from my face to the side and then I heard a thump as he brought the tire iron down and it stopped in midair, just short of my skull. A look of shock spread over his face. Abby had stopped the blow with a Tae Kwan Do defense called an "upperparts block." The man's smirk crumbled in terror. He jumped back into the car and screeched off, leaving the smell of burning rubber. Then he skidded to a stop halfway up the block and screeched at the top of his voice, the words echoing off the buildings, "Fucking lezzies!"

We checked the welt on the side of Abby's forearm. Her face flashed joy, and anger—at me. I felt both foolish and exhilarated. Women defending women was new and wonderful to us, and for me, being defended by a woman was one of the most satisfying moments of my life up to that point. After the incident, we formed a women's class at the Tae Kwan Do studio where Abby and Jayne studied and we began to promote self-defense for women. This was the beginning of a commitment to martial arts and self-defense for women, which ultimately became the signature identity of Cell 16.

I began thinking of Tae Kwan Do as a metaphor for revolution. The philosophy behind the practice was beautiful: self-defense to win. I believed we had to mobilize a social force to operate in that manner. I wanted our group to go out into every corner of the country and tell women the truth, recruit local people, poor and working-class people, to build a new society. There were so many areas of the country dependent on the defense industry—whole towns that would be unemployed if the industry left—that the government had to keep the war going. If a great many people lost their jobs, those who controlled the government would be exposed, capitalism itself would be exposed. I thought that women were more likely than men to rebel and organize—even if it were not economically beneficial in the short term—to save humanity, to build a new world for human values and for their own liberation. If women gained consciousness of their own oppression and learned the techniques of self-defense, revolution would follow.

One member of our group wanted nothing to do with martial arts, however, and she kept me focused on racism. Mary Ann was a child of Roxbury, Boston's black district, and was disillusioned with the Black Power movement, fearing violence on the horizon and angry with its male chauvinism. She was writing a critical essay for the second issue of the journal.

Mary Ann had been a follower of Malcolm X after he left the Nation of Islam in 1964 and until his assassination a year later. I had not given much thought to Malcolm X since his death, though his profound insights about colonialism, racism, and power had become a part of my understanding of the revolutionary vocation. Mary Ann brought him alive for me. She possessed hours of audiotapes she had made of him speaking. One in particular changed my approach to organizing and teaching: it was a two-hour recording of a live Boston talk-radio show that had aired a few weeks before he was assassinated. I had never heard Malcolm lecture and seen television interviews, but I had never heard him in conversation with ordinary people. Nearly all the calls were angry—from white supremacists and white liberals, from black lib-

and black power advocates, from still-faithful Nation of Islam members. What struck me was Malcolm's respect for each caller as a dignified human being. He validated each person's anger, but pointed to the real culprit—the capitalist system, the greedy ruling class and its evil use of power and militarism. In each case, he won a friend if not a convert to his ideas. I listened to that tape—I still listen to it—hundreds of times, trying to learn Malcolm's method of teaching.

One night Mary Ann banged on the door in the middle of the night. Three of her coworkers in a black education project had been found dead, murdered execution-style in their Boston office where Mary Ann would have been, too, had she not been home sick with the flu. Now Mary Ann believed the killer was stalking her. She stayed with Hannah and me for protection from possible danger. She drank whiskey and slept for days while Hannah and I took turns keeping guard. Working day and night on the journal, we had already developed the habit of sleeping and eating in short interludes over a twenty-four-hour period, rather than in blocks, ending up with little sleep. It was as though we were sleepwalkers passing each other at odd hours.

Mary Ann gradually regained her clarity and resumed work on her essay, which she titled "An Argument for Black Women's Liberation as a Revolutionary Force." Addressing African-American women activists, she wrote, "We have found that Women's Liberation is an extremely emotional issue, as well as an explosive one. Black men are still parroting the master's little about male superiority . . . you should be warned that the opposition for liberation will come from every place, particularly from other men and from black men. Don't allow yourselves to be intimidated any longer with this nonsense about the 'matriarchy' of black women."

Late early December, I persuaded Mary Ann to drive with Abby and me New York for the 1968 *Guardian* newspaper's 20th-anniversary event featuring Herbert Marcuse, singer Pete Seeger, and black militant H. Rap Brown, who had allied himself with the Black Panthers, as Stokely Carmichael had also. The scene was disastrous, and we returned without Mary Ann.

A huge audience of radicals, black and white, squeezed into the Fillmore East auditorium on the Lower East Side. Tension was in the air; people were edgy, irritable, and defensive. The white radical *Guardian* speakers exhorted us to have "soul," whereas Rap Brown, the former SNCC chairman and now a Black Panther, was cold and logical. Pete Seeger looked frightened and kept singing upbeat songs to calm the tense audience. Scuffles broke out in the auditorium over "ideological" disagreements. The elderly Marcuse was serene and wise as usual, but there was no other moment of relief.

The event ended early when Rap Brown abruptly walked out. He had warned the audience that if there were any wisecracks he would leave, and then he proceeded to give the audience a whipping, so misdirected, accusing us of voting for Hubert Humphrey for president! Finally, someone blurted out that he didn't vote for anyone, and the audience applauded. Rap Brown walked out with his bodyguards, after which all the blacks in the audience stood up to walk out, then everyone.

Mary Ann said she felt guilty about being with Abby and me, defending Rap Brown, whom she had criticized sharply in the past. I felt hopeless. Abby was offended by the whole affair. She was sick with a cold and had gone to a lot of trouble to attend. She insisted on driving back to Boston immediately, even though we had made appointments to see many people in New York, including Valerie, who was back in the Manhattan jail awaiting a hearing.

Mary Ann didn't ride back with us, and soon after, she left for California. Then Ellen left her husband and moved with her daughters from Cambridge to Boston to take a break from the group. Gail drifted away, too, to work with the emerging gay liberation movement. The original group was scattering, but new women, mostly students and radical women abandoning SDS as it fell apart in factional battles, were clamoring to join. Only Dana, Betsy, and I were left from the original group, and with Abby, Jayne, Jeanne, and Hannah, we would have to figure out a way to incorporate new members and decide on priorities for work.

I knew that our problematic relationship with male-dominated movements was something we needed to resolve. Yet every time I ventured into that world, I became even more certain that a women's liberation movement must lead if change was to occur. And an event I attended during that time made me wonder if communication was going to be possible at all.

I sat by myself in a large lecture hall at Northeastern University. The late autumn night was chilly and the big room with high ceilings was unheated. Even though there was seating capacity for hundreds and there were flyers all over the Boston area advertising the event, there were no more than a few dozen people in the audience. The event was sponsored by Newsreel, an offshoot of SDS. Perhaps the fissures in SDS—the Progressive Labor Party, a Maoist-Stalinist cult, was on the verge of taking over—accounted for the small turnout. I had hoped to connect with some female student activists to raise the question of women's liberation, but I was also interested in the film they were going to show.

The Columbia Revolt was a long documentary about the action that Columbia University SDS members had taken to seize and hold buildings on campus only a few months earlier. Every frame reeked of aggression. I tried to figure out if the actual atmosphere had been violent or if the violence was a creation of the filmmakers, though the depiction of helmeted police swinging batons and cracking heads at the end obviously reflected authentic brutality and violence. But most of the film was about the occupying students, sitting in, giving speeches and press conferences, hanging out of windows to receive food and drink from supporters. The most prominent figure was Mark Rudd, the Columbia SDS president. Aggression permeated the speeches and body movements of the speakers. Few women were shown, but their voices, too, were aggressive.

I felt emotionally drained and uninspired at the end of the film. When the lights came on, two young men in Levis, bomber jackets, and motorcycle boots clomped onto the stage and strutted back and forth in the style of Mick Jagger and began to harangue the audience. They were the Newsreel filmmakers, and they announced that they were members of a

street-fighting group named "Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers," or "Motherfuckers" for short.

A middle-aged Latino janitor wearing dark blue overalls came on stage to set up a podium and microphone. The "Motherfuckers" paced and raved, ignoring the janitor and apparently not requiring a lectern or microphone to transmit their message. Their voices boomed and bounced off the high ceilings, echoing.

"What is the duty of every white dude under the age of thirty, huh, motherfuckers?" demanded the dark-haired, skinny one.

"Doesn't anyone here know or care? Ain't no motherfuckers here?" the stocky, blond one demanded.

"Join the revolution," a male voice in the audience replied.

"Off the pigs," shouted another.

"You're gettin' there brothers. But the really essential act you must commit before you can become a revolutionary is to kill your parents. I mean it, kill mommy and daddy."

I didn't know which of the filmmakers said that because I was watching the janitor and thinking of my father, of the two years after he quit sharecropping and worked as the school janitor where my brothers and sister and I went to school, how my older brother and sister who were in high school were ashamed that their father was the janitor. His own father—my grandfather—had become president of the school board of the same rural school thirty years before when the Wobblies won control. While I stared at the janitor, who probably hoped he was invisible to the audience, I caught the look on his face and the jerk of his body when the words, "Kill your parents," echoed through the hall. His dark eyes filled with terror. He turned sharply and faced the audience. He looked cornered, as though he thought the young white people might turn into a mob and attack him as the only parent or over-thirty person present.

The Motherfuckers' prescription for killing the family was not what I had in mind in calling for the end of the institution of the family. As I walked home I named for myself what I had just witnessed—class conflict and revolution for the hell of it, fun and games.

Their nihilistic style repelled me. Yet I knew I was not comfortable with the New Left's model of "organizing" either, nor with using the term "organizer" to describe who I was and what I was doing, or how I saw female liberation. Not that I was anti-organization, but I considered organizing to be an aspect of many other activities, rather than an all-encompassing identity.

I thought of myself as a revolutionary, and organizing activities to spread the word was simply a part of what I did. I wanted to see women liberated, thinking for ourselves, not just organized into a political constituency. But it was a designation—organizer—held in the highest esteem in the civil rights movement, and it was the term used by most of the women in the women's liberation movement.

Beyond the term itself, was the corollary implication of "having a base" in a community. Community could be defined as a neighborhood or larger geographical entity, or as a constituency, such as students, youth, women, the poor, GIs, workers, each with possible subgroups. Later, in the '70s, when race and gender became the central issues of activism in the United States, it was called "identity politics," to which many, such as former SDS president Todd Gitlin, attributed the demise of the "beloved community" of community organizing. Yet "identity politics" was merely an extension of the constituency organizing he hailed as superior.

Historically, radical anti-capitalist movements in the United States had ended up being sucked in by the centripetal pull of electoral politics without ever having dislodged the economic base of power. I knew that organizing and appealing to the government for reform had won many concessions for the powerless in economic terms, and plenty of personal privilege for the leaders of such constituencies, but it had never made a dent in the rock of U.S. capitalism. The Industrial Workers of the World were perhaps the only ones who had ever tried, and who absolutely missed the route of reformism and electoral politics. It was the only model I felt we could look to, but this time we'd base the project on female liberation principles.

What I had visualized at the beginning of 1968 had become a reality by the year's end—a women's liberation movement, and me in the middle of it. Yet I had serious unfinished business in my own relationship with a man.

As we had agreed, I joined Louis in Paris at Christmastime to stay for three weeks. From the minute I stepped into the air terminal, Louis and I began fighting, and it went on for the entire three weeks, often coming close to violence. I was not willing to change, and he was not willing to give up on changing me. I felt I was fighting for my life, and probably he felt the same. Louis had been living with his very bourgeois aunt and uncle, but he had fought with them the day before I arrived and they refused to allow me to stay there as we had planned. So in anger he had moved out and was homeless. Our UCLA friends Fred and Lynn still lived in Paris and had gone away for the holidays, so we stayed at their flat. We could not figure out how to light the gas heater, the only heat in the large attic flat, nor how to make the cooking stove work. The only place to keep from freezing was under the covers, so we spent waking hours in cafés, and walking, arguing. Louis had not sought out the leftists who had come near making a revolution in May. He had been in Paris only six weeks when I arrived and was caught up in the usual family affairs and intrigues of living with relatives.

Some of the statues in the parks retained the slogans from May. I occupied myself in translating them, writing them in my notebook. They helped me survive the ordeal of ending a relationship:

- In a society that has abolished every kind of adventure the only adventure that remains is to abolish the society.
- We are all "undesirables."
- Be realistic, demand the impossible.
- Power to the imagination.
- Unbutton your mind as often as your fly.
- Form dream committees.
- Religion is the ultimate con.
- If God existed it would be necessary to abolish him.

- Only the truth is revolutionary.
- No forbidding allowed.
- The future will only contain what we put into it.

Not much beyond the slogans remained from the May revolution. Simone de Beauvoir had observed, "The revolution was stillborn." But she also had written that it was important in that it was the first time in thirty-five years that the question of a socialist revolution was raised in an advanced capitalist country. She opined that the lesson to be learned from it was the necessity for creating a vanguard to maintain the momentum leading to a successful revolution, and that building a vanguard would take time. Still, that seed of thought, that lesson that came out of the 1968 revolts in Mexico, Czechoslovakia, France, Columbia, Chicago, and Tokyo, had germinated in me and in thousands of others. We believed a socialist revolution was not only possible, but also necessary.

When I left Paris, I was one of a half-dozen passengers on the Pan Am nonstop flight to Boston. Louis and I parted as we had met at the airport, arguing. I knew I would never see him again as a husband, although I did not write that final letter—breaking all contact with him—for another three months after returning to Boston. On that lonely January 1969 flight, I knew I would be on my own, and free, again.

V
SISTERHOOD IN THE TIME OF WAR

BACK HOME IN Cambridge in early January 1969, I opened three weeks of mail—overdue bills, journal orders, movement newspapers, and fan mail. Some men's responses to our movement were encouraging. A GI based in Thailand wrote that he had read our journal in San Francisco and thought we were the only hope of saving the world, and wanted to know what he could do. I wrote and told him what I thought: he should desert the army and work for women's liberation.

Most of the letters were from women from all over the country, and Canada and Europe. One was from Margaret Randall, who described herself as an American poet and feminist living in Mexico. She sent several issues of *El Corno Emplumado*/*The Plumed Horn*, a bilingual literary quarterly she had started when she moved to Mexico in 1962. I had never heard of Margaret Randall at that time. She appeared enthusiastic about our journal and the women's liberation movement in general, but was preoccupied with her own precarious situation—following the student uprising of the previous October, all leftists were now targets of the Mexican government. Within a few months, she would have to escape into hiding and flee to Cuba where she remained for a decade, and where I would meet her in 1970.

Soon after my return, Cell 16 convened and we completed the issue of our journal. I took it to the printer, and it was ready a week later. Embellished in red on the off-white cover was its new name: *EMBLAZONED IN RED: A JOURNAL OF FEMALE LIBERATION*. There were 128 pages with twenty-six items by ten authors listed in the table of contents, among them Mary Ann's piece on black women, Betsy's on man as an obsolete life form and one on radical men, Dana's on the role of the woman in the revolution, and my sixteen-page essay, "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution." We had also published a nine-page group editorial titled "What Do You Women Want?" in response to the many questions we had received, in which we explained our organizational rationale: "We all felt strongly that our movement must be grassroots, and emerge from the truth of our suffering. We wanted to set an example of what could be done."

Meanwhile, I grappled for a subject to present at the first Southern Women's conference, which would be held in Atlanta in early February. Anne Braden, a veteran white civil rights organizer and codirector of the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF), had invited Abby, who asked me to go in her place. I finally decided to present "Country Women," an autobiographical essay in which I revealed my own background in print for the first time. I felt I owed it to the women I might meet at the Atlanta conference, assuming that many of them would come from rural backgrounds of deprivation like my own.

In the farming community where I grew up, the distinction between male and female was absolute. But the women had their own "privileges" of wealthy women. However, men had many of the "privileges" reserved for men only. For instance, women were expected to work in the fields doing heavy labor when needed, while men were never expected to do domestic work or care for their children. The care of the children was in the hands of women. Women cared for one another while pregnant and in labor. They helped each other with the care of the babies and children. In

way, children were raised "communally," but with women only sharing the labor.

In some country families the women did dominate—perhaps more often than did the men. There was a division of labor based on sex, and totally separate spheres of responsibility. But since poor country men had no power outside the patriarchal family and there was no town government, there was no exteriorization of the patriarchal role. Many women ran farms, their husbands serving as sort of foremen. But in order to have such independence, the woman had to "have a man." "Old maids" and widows were powerless and considered tragic.

In general, women talked as loudly and as much as men in mixed company, though most activities were segregated. Any joke about women was met with a more biting joke about men, or the reverse. The women were not passive, nor were they expected to be "soft" and "maternal." They whipped their children, yelled at them, and demanded that they entertain themselves. But the men were not abstract figures; they were constantly present, in and out, living in crowded quarters with the family.

The women basically treated the men as weaklings who needed to be kept in line to prevent them from deserting the family and from drinking. Generations of men moving off to the West leaving women in charge of farms and children made for very sturdy women but also for meandering men. I know my mother feared that my "cowboy" father would one day walk out or take to drinking. To the women, equality could only mean equal bondage. If they were to be tied to farm and work, the men should be also. The men wanted the freedom to roam but they also wanted a family. They could not have both, and the women policed their behavior. By the time I was born in 1938, many of these patterns were beginning to change, so that by the time I left home in 1955, the traditional cultural patterns had been shattered . . .

In the late '40s and early '50s, many of the dirt farmers went to work in the cities at defense plants and moved off the land. My

mother wanted to do that so she could have a refrigerator, a stove, running water, a bathroom, closets, things that all city people seemed to have even if they were very poor. My father refused to move to the city, but he did finally stop trying to make it farming and took a job driving a gas truck and other part-time jobs.

Then it was in the early fifties that movies and television invaded the culture, introducing new (urban, northern) patterns. The city people on the screen mystified the country folk, and they were humiliated in their ignorance and roughness. The women were embarrassed by the soft, white ladies in low-cut gowns with their jewels and high-heeled shoes when measured up against themselves—country women with their leathered, brown skin and muscles, drab work clothes, and heavy shoes. The men felt “more manly” toward the soft-voiced, tender ladies on the screen than toward their own unsightly women.

The image of the male that Hollywood created was not very different from the country man, particularly the cowboy. The female image, however, was totally different from the country women's reality. They would have to change completely—physically and psychologically. It didn't work. The sight of country women in rhinestones and platform heels and brief dresses over their muscular bodies was a pitiful one indeed. And so the men left them (in fantasy) for Hollywood (the new West).

A smart country girl lies about her humble background when she goes to the city—that is, if she wants to catch a city man who will raise her status. So the poor country girl grows up in ignorance, destined to either marry a poor farmer and live in relative poverty or to move into the post-war economy of urban employment, or she might get lucky and make it into a higher class through marriage (as I did). In any case, her identity will remain highly confused. Ashamed of her class status, she probably will not in her lifetime discover her caste status as a woman, though she is fully aware that she is subservient to the men of her class, who are just as poor. It took

me many years to find out that I could never “make it” in this society, even if I excelled, because I was born female, not male.

The airplane took off from Boston for Atlanta after a two-hour delay due to snow. I wondered how I would recognize Anne Braden. When I asked her on the telephone, she'd said, “Don't worry. Movement people always recognize each other.” I knew she did not mean the women's liberation movement, but rather The Movement that had its source in the southern civil rights movement. I pondered the statement and wondered what characteristics in me would identify me as a movement person?

The plane landed, and I struggled with my bag containing not only 100 copies of my paper, but also 50 copies of the journal. I walked out at the end of the line of passengers and looked around. People waiting for arrivals paired off while other passengers walked toward the baggage claim. I searched the faces of people who passed by—masses going back and forth. No one stopped at my gate. Ten minutes passed. Dozens of passengers gathered at the gate to board the flight back to Boston. I didn't have a single phone number in Atlanta, and I didn't even know the location of the conference.

Then, out of the throng of people walking toward me from the main entrance, I picked one out: I knew that it was Anne Braden. She walked directly to me.

“I was drinking coffee. Must have missed the announcement,” she said. I was amazed. How did she recognize me? How did I pick her out of the crowd? Anne was so ordinary looking—fiftyish, graying bobbed hair, wearing a plain gray wool skirt and sweater, comfortable shoes.

Anne chain-smoked while she drove. Her voice was soft, her accent deep southern, not the twang of the border South, like Oklahoma. She told me she was originally from the elite of Anniston, Alabama, near Birmingham, and she had joined the pre-civil rights movement during the forties when she was in college.

“That must have been hard for a young, white woman from the South during that time,” I said.

"I can't say it was easy, but we had a lot more going for us in the South than we get credit for. There'd been a real big movement to free the Scotsboro boys a decade earlier."

I was embarrassed, but I asked: "Who were the Scotsboro boys?"

Anne didn't say what surely had passed through her mind—you never heard of the Scotsboro case, and you're a historian?—but instead she explained.

"In 1931, in Scotsboro, Alabama—that's a mostly white town nearly to the Tennessee border—nine black teenage boys were accused of raping two white girls and were convicted by an all-white jury. Wasn't the first time—happened all the time. But a lot of depression-days organizing was going on back then, the sharecroppers union and all, so there was a big defense of the boys that got them free."

"What was the Sharecroppers Union?" I thought of my father, sharecropping during the depression, and wondered if he knew about that union.

"Black and white sharecroppers in the South joined together to fight for their rights to be treated fairly by the rich landlords," she said.

"My father was a sharecropper in Oklahoma at that time. I guess that union didn't get there. His father had been a Wobbly, organizing sharecroppers when my father was young."

"Your daddy was a sharecropper and your grandpa a Wob? I'll be damned." I could tell that Anne thought she knew a lot about me from those facts, and that pleased me because not many leftists I met validated my sense of who I was.

Inside the church conference center, about a hundred women were clustered in pairs or small groups, all appearing to know each other. I noticed two age groups—Anne's generation of middle-aged women, and younger women in their twenties—representing the two waves of the civil rights movement in the South. Both age groups dressed conservatively in printed housedresses or fifties-style skirts and pullover sweaters. I was self-conscious in my army surplus garb and navy pea jacket.

I fingered the literature and found several papers on familiar subjects.

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There was a piece on the Grinké sisters—the daughters of a South Carolina slave owner who became militant feminists and abolitionists during the 1830s, and a paper on Mother Jones who, at the age of seventy, began organizing miners' wives and children in Appalachia, and was at the founding meeting of the Wobblies. When she was eighty-four, she joined the striking Wobbly miners in 1914 at Ludlow, Colorado, and was thrown in jail. There was another paper on the young white women who worked in southern textile mills, and one on Fannie Lou Hamer, the black Mississippi sharecropper who was a civil rights leader and founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party that had challenged LBJ and the Democratic elite in 1964.

I sat down on one of the folding chairs that lined the wall. The woman next to me said, "Why, you must be Anne's friend from up North."

"I live in Boston but I'm from Oklahoma originally."

"Well, welcome home. I live in Louisville but I was raised up in the Tennessee coalfields. My daddy was a miner and a union man till he died last year—black lung. Half the women up in the mining towns are black lung widows. Me and some others have started a campaign for health and safety." I told her that all my ancestors had come from Tennessee, and she remarked that we were probably cousins.

Anne walked up to us. "So you two met. I thought you'd get along, seeing as how you both come from union families. Did Roxanne tell you that her daddy was a sharecropper and her granddaddy a Wobbly?" I felt guilty not mentioning how right wing and antiunion my father had become in his later years.

A tall, very thin, very young woman took Anne aside. They whispered and gestured, then they turned to me. Anne introduced Lyn Wells as "the best organizer in the history of the South, and still a teenager." Lyn shook my hand. She looked as if she had just stepped off a page of a 1950s issue of *Saveteen* magazine—she wore a long-sleeved, white cotton, high-necked Victorian blouse, a wool tartan skirt below the knees, and penny loafers. Her honey-colored hair was long but carefully waved.

"I turn twenty tomorrow, a sad day. And don't forget I'm a high school

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dropout. Hey, I've got to go to the airport to pick up Marilyn Webb. I'll be back by lunch. You're coming to lunch with us, Roxanne," Lyn said.

Anne told me that Lyn's father was from rural Virginia, a trade unionist who fell in love with a union secretary from Washington, D.C. Lyn was the only child of the couple—the mother college-educated, Jewish, the father an unschooled workingman. Lyn was a "red-diaper baby," raised in the movement. "Lyn's bound and determined to prove that the southern white working class can be organized and can become anti-racist."

Anne said that Lyn was one of the main officers of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) that had formed to support the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SSOC was based in Nashville but Lyn traveled all over the South organizing white students and working-class youth.

I had met Marilyn Webb at the Sandy Springs women's liberation gathering that Dana and I had crashed back in August when we stormed in and ranted about Valerie Solanas and the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*. Given my performance there, I thought Marilyn might shun me, but she was friendly at our lunch meeting with Lyn. She had been invited to represent SDS women and to speak at the plenary session of the conference. She and Lyn talked about people and events with which I was unfamiliar, mentioning "Tom" and "Rennie," and the machinations of the Maoist Progressive Labor Party (PL), which was trying to take over the southern student organization as well as SDS. Women's liberation did not seem to be on either Lyn or Marilyn's mind.

Then Marilyn told a story about speaking at an antiwar rally in Washington, D.C., the month before.

"Men started yelling, 'Take her off the stage and fuck her.'"

"What did you do?" I asked.

"I just kept talking."

I looked at Marilyn in her tiny leather miniskirt and high boots, her carefully made-up face and hair, and wondered why she continued to dress in a way that seemed to invite that kind of response. But I censored

the thought because I believed that ideally, women should be free of harassment no matter how we dressed.

I chose an afternoon workshop on strategies for a southern women's liberation movement. Several dozen women sat in a circle. They asked many questions about Cell 16 and the burgeoning women's liberation movement in the North. Some had read my paper on country women—Anne had put all the copies out on the information table—and many had bought copies of the journal. I feared that the southern women would be put off by my militancy but they were not. I read some passages from the *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* to laughter and applause. I felt good and comfortable with those women. I talked about women as a caste. One woman asked if I had read Casey Hayden and Mary King's internal SNCC document on women as a caste, which I hadn't, and I felt frustrated at the kind of movement elitism that keeps so much within its own ranks, making it unavailable to anyone outside the closed circle.

The evening featured *Salt of the Earth*, Herbert Biberman's film made during the height of the McCarthy witch-hunt era; the film had been banned, and Biberman blacklisted. It was based on the true story of a miners' strike in Silver City, New Mexico, in 1950. As the repression against the strikers intensified, the men and women had reversed their traditional roles. An injunction against the male strikers moved the women to take over the picket line, leaving the men to domestic duties. The women were transformed from men's subordinates into their allies and equals.

The story was inspiring, but to me its message was clear—women could only be liberated in the process of workers' struggles, and apparently only as wives of workers, not as workers themselves. In 1969, the job categories dominated by women—service, domestic, erotic, electronics assembly, and many others—were not even considered as potential territory for labor organizing, and women were barred from most skilled-labor jobs.

To end the evening program, a movement folk singer, Anne Romasc, sang familiar church hymns and the old folk songs I'd grown up with, but